

**‘The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration’:
A Study
(1713 AD to 1818 AD)**



Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University Nanded
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Certificate

I certify that Mr. More Rahul Vasantrao has prepared his thesis entitled **‘The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)**, for the award of **Ph. D. degree** of the Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded, under my guidance. He has carried out the work at the Department of History, Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded.

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis entitled '**The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)**' has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Dande S. B., HOD of History, Mahatma Basweshwar Mahavidyalaya, Latur. No part of thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

Place: Latur

Date: / 2020

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Acknowledgement

History is the continuous process of the human development. History is one of the branches of education in which the process of human civilization from Stone Age to machine age is studied. There are a number of approaches of the history like political history, economical history, art history, comparative history, cultural history etc. The political history is widely studied as a number of wars, battles, treaties; dynasties etc. have contributed in a large extent in the development of history.

Political history has enriched the Indian history. There were many powers not only at the national level but also at the regional levels. One of the reasons of the decline of the Indus Civilization was the political reason given by the historians. While studying national and the international history, we must know our regional history. Maharashtra is one of the important regions in India. The state has a vast political, economical, cultural, art etc. history.

The history of India is incomplete without history of Marathas. It was the power, once upon a time, whose control was all over India. The power of Marathas was the main obstacle for the British to expand their rule in India. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who was crowned as Chhatrapati in 1674 AD, was the powerful ruler in Medieval India. His Swaraj was the great threat to the mighty Mughals, whose control was over almost all Indian rulers. But the Chhatrapatis and the Peshwas loosened the Mughal power and weakened the regional rules all over India.

The Chhatrapatis were dominant in the Maratha administration till 1749 AD, but afterwards the minister of the Chhatrapati i.e. the Peshwas became dominant in the administration. So, the political and the administrative relations between the Chhatrapatis and the Peshwas is an

important topic for the research. In this regard, I thought it is necessary to study 'The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration'. While doing research on this topic, the political and administrative role of the four Chhatrapatis i.e. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj in the Peshwa era has been studied. The Peshwas' control and dominance in the administration has been studied.

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Index

Sr. No	Chapter No.	Title	Page No.
1	01	Introduction	01 to 22
2	02	The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era	23 to 58
3	03	The Historical background of the Peshwas	59 to 93
4	04	The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration (1713 AD to 1777 AD)	94 to 228
5	05	The Role Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration (1777 AD to 1818 AD)	229 to 266
6	06	Conclusion	267 to 284
7		Bibliography	285 to 298
8		Appendix-01 Genealogy of Chhatrapati and Peshwas	299 to 300
9		Appendix-02 Map of Maratha Empire	301
10		Appendix-03 Photo of Shaniwar Wada	302
11		Appemdix-04 Historical Documents	303 to 321

Chapter I

Introduction

Chapter I

Introduction

India is the culturally diverse country. This fact reflects in every state, village as well as every person of this country. One of the important aspects of this culture is the history of India. From white snow of the Himalaya to blue water of the Indian Ocean and from extreme hot desert of Rajasthan to the thick rainforests of the North-Eastern states the Indian history is always interesting. Indian history is very broad, glorious and vast among all the countries. The Indian history is known since Before Common Era. There is a lot of contribution of the political affairs in the Indian history.

Various political dynasties, civil wars, foreign invasions, foundation of various powers etc. have contributed a lot in the gloriousness of the Indian history. The Maurya, the Satvahanas, the Nandas, the Shungas, the Kanvas, the Vardhanas, the Guptas, the Palas, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Rashtrakutas etc. were main Indian dynasties and the Kushanas, the Shakas, the Pahalavas etc. were the foreign dynasties who enriched the Indian history. When we think about the religious impact in the ancient history, the dynasties were the followers of the Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Some rulers from foreign dynasties were influenced by the Indian philosophy and rich knowledge and not only patronized the Indian religions but followed these religions also. Kushan emperor Kanishka followed the Bauddha religion. Like Kanishka, Minander aka Milind also became the follower Bauddha religion. There was a lot of attraction of Indian religion like Hindu, Bauddha and Jain religion to the foreigners which can be observed today also.

Many invasions took place during the medieval period. Some rulers established their power in India. As per religious history the Muslim religion was dominant than other religions.

The Islam religion entered into India along with the invasion of Muhammad Bin Kasim. Many invasions took place after that also but no one established the Muslim rule in India. Mohammad of Ghor also known as Mohammad Ghori defeated Prithviraj Chauhan and established the power in Delhi. The Muslims entered in the politics of India along with the establishment of the rule by Muhammad Ghori. The Slaves, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyed and Lodis ruled during the Sultanate Period after Ghori. Babur established the Mughal dynasty in 1526 AD after defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat. The Muslims were dominant in the rule and administration at the central level. The rulers were Muslim and subjects were Hindu. Some Muslim rulers spread Islam by force. Traditional Indian kings opposed the Muslim rulers and protected and conserved the Indian culture.

One of the Indian rulers who opposed the Muslim rulers was the Marathas. There were Muslim rules in South India also. One of the important rulers was Adilshah of Bijapur. Adilshah was powerful in Maharashtra. The sardars and officers exploited the Hindus. The Mughal sardars also followed religious politics and exploited the Hindus. They imposed cruel taxes, rules and regulations. The movement started in Maharashtra to oppose that exploitation.

Shivaji Maharaj laid the foundation of the Hindavi Sawaraj in the early eighteenth century. His father, Shahaji Bhosle, was the Jagirdar of

Bijapur. His ambition was to oppose the atrocities of the Mughals and Adilshahs and to establish an independent rule for the Hindu subjects. Shivaji Maharaj fought various battles with Adilshah and Mughals and strengthened the Hindavi Swaraj. He held the title the Chhatrapati in his coronation ceremony in 1674 AD. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj not only fought wars and battles for the Swaraj but also, he gave an excellent administration. He formed a council of eight ministers to assist him in the administration. That council was known as the Ashtpradhan Mandal. The Peshwa was one of them. The Peshwa had many powers compared to the other ministers. There was a lot of importance to the Peshwa after Chhatrapati. Though the ministers were running the administration, the final decision and supreme power was with the Chhatrapati only.

After Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji, Chhatrapati Rajaram, Chhatrapati Shivaji II ruled over Swaraj. The civil war took place in Maratha kingdom in 1707 AD. It took place between Tarabai, Chhatrapati Rajaram's wife and Prince Shahu, son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji. The Maratha kingdom was divided into two thrones and those were Satara and Kolhapur. The power and authorities of Hindavi Swaraj was centered with Satara throne only. The rulers from Kolhapur could not give their best in the history of Marathas.

There are the two periods of the History of Marathas, the Shiv era and the Peshwa era or Peshwaai. The rule from Chhatrapati Shivaji to Chhatrapati Shivaji II comes under the Shiv era and the rule from Chhatrapati Shahu to Chhatrapati Pratapsinh comes under the Peshwaai. The Peshwaai began during the rule of Chhatrapati Shahu, because the Peshwas became dominant during that period only.

Balaji Vishwanath played an important role during the civil war and helped Shahu to become Chhatrapati. So, Chhatrapati Shahu initially gave him the title 'Senakarte' and later he was given Peshwaship. The office of the Peshwa got a lot of importance during the period of Balaji Vishwanath. No Pradhan or minister was allowed to take decision without the permission of Chhatrapati during the Shiv era. But the political situation completely changed during the period of Chhatrapati Shahu. The main reason behind that was the skillful personality of Balaji Vishwanath like bravery, organization skill, diplomacy, loyalty towards the Chhatrapati etc. So Chhatrapati Shahu allowed him to take decision without his permission in some cases. Though, Balaji Vishwanath was given complete authority, he was loyal towards the Chhatrapati. The loyalty could be seen when Balaji Vishwanath handed over the 'Chauthai' and 'Sirdeshmukhi' towards the Chhatrapati. It shows the loyalty towards Chhatrapati Shahu.

Peshwaship was not hereditary. It was given as per the ability of the person. But after the death of Balaji Vishwanath, his son Bajirao I was appointed as the Peshwa. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed Bajirao I as Peshwa, because he wanted to express his gratitude towards the contribution and loyalty of Balaji Vishwanath for the Swaraj. After Bajirao I, his son Balaji Bajirao, Madhavrao, Narayanrao, Sawai Madhavrao, Bajirao II were appointed as the Peshwa. During the same period Chhatrapati Shahu (1707 to 1748 AD), Chhatrapati Ramraja (1748 to 1777 AD), Chhatrapati Shahu II (1777 to 1808 AD), Chhatrapati Pratapsinh (1808 to 1839 AD) ruled over the Swaraj from Satara. The Chhatrapatis could not pay attention towards the administration. So, the Peshwas became real head and Chhatrapatis became the nominal head of the Swaraj. How the power was handed over

towards Peshwa from Chhatrapati both, Chhatrapati and Peshwa, could not understand.

It is my effort to study the Chhatrapatis' role in administration through the research topic **'The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study' (1707 AD to 1818 AD)**

1. Objectives of the Research:

1. To study the role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa administration.
2. To Study the Peshwa era from 1713 AD to 1818 AD
3. To study the reign of Chhatrapatis of Satara from 1713 AD to 1818 AD
4. To study social, economic and political role of Chhatrapatis along with administrative role.

2.Importance of the Topic:

Many researchers have studied the Peshwa period and their administration. But Chhatrapatis of Satara, especially since the period of Ramraja, got neglected. So, I have selected the topic The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD) for the research. I hope the research will provide the various ideas for the further study to the new researchers and students of history.

3.Hypothesis of the research:

The following hypotheses have been given through the pre-knowledge, experience, views and study.

1. The Chhatrapatis were nominal in the Peshwa administration.
2. The Chhatrapatis neglected the administration.
3. The Peshwas became chiefs of the Maratha Empire due the negligence of the Chhatrapatis.
4. The loyalty of the early Peshwas towards the Chhatrapatis and central power was responsible for the rise of Peshwa era.

5. Necessity of the Research:

The history of the Marathas moves around the Chhatrapatis during the Shiv Era. But the same history moves around the Peshwas during Peshwa Era. The Chhatrapatis, who were the chief in the Maratha Empire, were neglected in the course of time. The researchers and students of history will get the new direction for the study about History of Maratha.

6. Research Methodology:

The reference book method has been used for the Research ‘Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)’

7. Review of the Previous Research

According to the research topic review of the previous research has been studied related to the Chhatrapatis and Peshwas. It was not possible to review all the research, so important and necessary research has been reviewed

1. Ghadge M. A. : Impact of Holkar and Peshwe Relationship on Maratha Power: An Analytical Study

2. Dr. Omshiva Ligade : Marathekalin Jaatiy Tante aani Shiksha
Yancha Chikitsak Abhyas
3. Kamble Ramesh Haribhau : Maranthyanchoy Itihasatil Chimaji Appache
Yogdan: Ek Chikitsak Abhyas
4. Dr. Anil Kahare : Marathekaalin Samaj, Gunhe, Dand aani
Shiksha: Ak Abhays
5. Gaikwad Deepak S. : Maratha Navy: An Inquiry into Its
Limitations and Contemporary Challenges
6. Singh Dilbagh : Maratha State Formation with Reference to
Shinde and Holkar
7. Khare G. H. : Maratha War of Independence
8. Tulpure S. G. : Marathi Bakharitil Farshinche Swarup
9. Yogeshwari Tiwari : Maratha Nobility Under the Mughal Period
1628-1707: A Study
10. Shikhare S. V. : Marathyanchoy Armaracha Itihas
11. Shridhar Rangnath Kulkarni: Shivkalin Rajniti and Ranniti
12. Kulkarni Madhukar R. : Nana Fadnisachya Prashasan Vyavasthekhali
Marathi Rajya Prashasanache Swarup

8. The Sources of the Research:

The Primary and Secondary sources have been used for the research 'The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1717 AD to 1818 AD). The original documents, letters etc. have been referred for the study in the primary sources and the various reference books have been referred for the study in the secondary sources.

9. Outline of the Chapters:

The thesis has been divided into six chapters and these are as follow:

Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction is the first chapter of the thesis. Introduction of the thesis, the objectives of the selection of the topic, objectives of the research, hypothesis, necessity of the research, research methodology, reference sources, limitations of the research, review of the earlier study about the topic, the concepts of the Chhatrapatis and Peshwa etc. have been studied in the first chapter.

Chapter II

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era.

The establishment of the Swaraj, the control of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on the Swaraj and Ashtpradhan, the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj in the administration, the rule and power of Chhatrapati Rajaram

Maharaj, the important decisions of Maharani Tarabai for the Swaraj during the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji II etc. have been studied in the chapter.

Chapter III

The Historical Background of the Peshwas

Introduction and creation of the post of the 'Peshwa' has been studied in this chapter. The study has been done to show that the office of the Peshwa was in administration before the introduction of Ashtpradhan. The early Peshwas from Shamraj Nilkanth to Balaji Vishwanath have been studied in this chapter in detail.

Chapter IV

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration

(1713 AD to 1777 AD)

The rule of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and their role in the administration have been studied in the chapter. The Peshwas during that period like Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao I, Balaji Bajirao, Shrimant Madhavrao, Narayanrao and their relations with the Chhatrapati and decisions in the administration have been studied in the chapter. The transformation of the Maratha power to the Peshwa from Chhatrapati has been studied.

Chapter V

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration

(1777 AD to 1818 AD)

The rule of Chhatrapati Shahu II and Chhatrapati Pratapsinh and their role in the administration have been studied in this chapter. Along with this

the Peshwas like Sawai Madhavrao, Bajirao II and their relations with the Chhatrapati and decisions in the administration have been studied in this chapter. Along with the real and nominal rulers who were the Peshwas and the Chhatrapati respectively and their administrative roles have been studied.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The Conclusion is the final chapter of this thesis. The conclusions through the present research and study are given in this chapter. The suggestions have been given which have been drawn out from the conclusion.

10. Concepts

In order to understand the definite purpose of the present research, the concepts that come along with the research topics have been explained. It includes Chhatrapati, Hindavi Swaraj, Peshwa etc. concepts have been explained in short and have been tried to confirm the direction of the research. Along with this, the title of the research is ‘The Role of Chhatrapatis with the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)’ and in that regard, while presenting the outline in the ‘Introduction’, the important events in the political career of all the Chhatrapatis and the Peshwas in the power of Maratha have been briefly discussed. The genealogies of the family of the Chhatrapatis and the Peshwa have been given in the appendix.

In the seventeenth century, there was the dominance of the Mughals not only over Deccan, but all over India. There was control of Nizamshah of

Ahamadnagar, Adilshah of Bijapur, Imadshah of Berar, Qutubshah of Gowalkonda etc. along with the Mughals. In short, according to the religious aspect, there was control of the Muslim rulers on the region with Hindu majority. The Muslim rulers used to exploit the Hindu subject on the basis of religion. The people in Maharashtra had to face the extra levies collected by the rulers, the forceful collection of the revenue, no concession during the natural calamities, exploitation of the women by their sardars and army etc. Shahaji Raje Bhosale was in the service of Bijapur and Ahamadnagar kingdoms. He had been getting the jagirs in Supe, Poona, Banglore etc. His wife, Jijabai was competent, and sharp minded and had a lot of self respect. Shahjiraje and Jijabai could not see the exploitation by the Muslim rulers. This thought gave birth to the concept of the 'Swaraj'. Shivaji Maharaj, son of Shahaji Raje and Jijabai brought this concept into existence.

Inspired by the great vision of his parents, Shivaji Maharaj took the oath at the age of sixteen at the Rairaeswar temple to establish the Swaraj. With his associates he checked the Bijapur and Mughal powers. His courageous acts like capture of Jawali, killing of terrific Afzalkhan, attack on Shaistekhan, escape from Agra and many such events formed his unique image in the South and these activities threatened the strong Mughal power. While achieving the various mile stones of success, Shivaji Maharaj also faced failure like the Treaty of Purandar. But like a phoenix bird he soared from the ashes and regained what he had lost.

10.1. Chhatrapati

Shivaji Maharaj fulfilled his dream to establish the Hindavi Swaraj. But an important task was yet to be completed and that was the coronation.

The foreign traders, Indian and foreign rulers were not ready to recognize Shivaji Maharaj as a king, because he was son of a Jagirdar. He had not got the kingdom in inheritance. It was necessary for him to win the general recognition as a sovereign of an independent state. On 6 June 1674, he was crowned at Raigad fort. He became Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. If we divide the word 'Chhatrapati', we will get the literal meaning. '*Chhtra*' means shelter and '*pati*' means owner, king or supreme. So, Chhatrapati means that the king who gives shelter to his subjects. Sir Jadunath Sirkar defines the word Chhatrapati and says, "Paramount sovereign."¹ Chhatrapati means supreme of the Swaraj, king of kings and controller of central power, absolute monarch and final decision maker. "After the coronation, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj introduced new chronology 'Rajyabhishek Shak' as a symbol of new state."²

The term 'Chhatrapati' defines that he was the master and supreme authority of the Jagirdars, sardars, ministers and pradhans in his Swaraj. Chhatrapati was the sovereign ruler of the state with the centralized power. There was control of any other ruler over him. Many Rajput rulers in Rajasthan were the vassals of the Mughals, but the Chhatrapati was not a vassal of any ruler. He was an independent ruler and free from the other rules.

All the supreme authorities in the administration were with the Chhatrapati. All the rights of vatans, saranjams, salary, appointment, promotion, transfer, termination etc. were with the Chhatrapati.

The Chhatrapatis in the Swaraj

10.1.1 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1674 AD to 1680 AD)

Though the duration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's reign was 1630 to 1680 AD, he was crowned on 6th June 1674. After the coronation, he was recognized as sovereign the ruler by the then rulers. He bore the title of Chhatrapati. From then onwards the rulers on the throne of Maratha power were called as the Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the first Chhatrapati of the Swaraj. He is well-known in the history not only as a great warrior, but also as an excellent administrator. He didn't make any office hereditary. The person had to achieve the office with his ability. He abrogated the vatandari system and began to pay in cash to the officers and soldiers. He had kept all the supreme powers in the administration with himself. He made his Swaraj strong by giving importance to the forts. The Pradhans or ministers in the Ashtapradhan were only to assist him in the administration and to give advice when the king asked for it, but it was not mandatory for him to accept the advice. The first duty of the Pradhans was to follow the orders of the Chhatrapati. He used to discuss with the ministers about the administrative and political matters. He used to respect the advices and suggestions of the ministers and as per the situation he used to accept the suggestions. He took the guidance of his mother, Jijabai in various political and the administrative matters.

10.1.2 Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj (1680 to 1689AD)

Though Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj got very less period to rule over the Swaraj, he retained the prestige of the office of the Chhatrapati like his father. He kept all the supreme powers with him and didn't hesitate to imprison the ministers themselves for violating the rules and policies of the

Swaraj. He introduced the office of “Chhandogamaty”³ for his close friend and advisor, Kavi Kalasha. He had the strong hold on the administration and created a unique identity in the history of the Marathas.

10.1.3 Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj (1689 AD to 1700 AD)

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was crowned as the Chhatrapati unexpectedly. He faced the tragic death of his brother, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and fought courageously against Aurangzeb while leading the Swaraj from Jinji in Tamil Nadu. He handed over the responsibility of the administration in Swaraj to Ramchandrapant Amatya⁴ before leaving for Jinji. He resumed the vatandari system in the Swaraj. It was an important change in the administration and it was resumed considering the then political situation. “He introduced two offices of Pratinidhi and Hukumatpanha.”⁵ Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb tried through many ways to destroy the Maratha power in the Deccan. So, under the leadership of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj the Maratha army fought against the Mughal army. Along with efficient sardars like Ramchandrapant Amatya, Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav etc. and the subjects in Swaraj, he began the war of independence. The administrative skills can be seen through successful leadership. Due to his diplomatic strategy, he didn’t let Aurangzeb to get success in the Swaraj.

10.1.4 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II and Maharani Tarabai (1700 AD and 1707 AD)

Maharani Tarabai, wife of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was the regent of her minor son, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. Despite being a woman, she had strong control over the administration. She controlled the

administration, sardars and the army, that is why Aurangzeb could not win the Swaraj. The Chhatrapati meant the Maratha administration was the rule in the administration until the rule of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II.

10.1.5 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (1707 AD to 1749 AD):

He returned in the Swaraj after a long captivity for eighteen years in the Mughal camp. Though he was in the captivity for a long period, he had the knowledge of the administration. He had control over the administration and all the sardars especially the Peshwas. The Maratha kingdom was transformed into a majestic empire only because of his excellent leadership. An important change in the administration during his reign was the increase in the importance of the Peshwas. Rest of the seven ministers in the Ashtapradhan lost their importance. So, the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa means the Maratha administration became the new rule in his reign.

10.1.6 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj (1749 AD to 1777):

The concept of the administration of the Maratha Empire was completely changed during the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, an adopted son of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The Chhatrapati's work was only to give the robes of the Peshwaship and the other offices. He tried to get the power in his hands, but in front of the dominance of Maharani Tarabai and Peshwa Nansasheb, he was helpless. From his reign, the Maratha administration began to concentrate around the Peshwa and the Chhatrapatis became secondary to the Peshwas.

10.1.7 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II (1777 to 1808 AD)

During the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, there was dominance of Nana Fadnis, the karbhari⁶. All the reins of the Maratha administration was in the hands of Nana Fadnis. His dominance increased to such extent that he was the whole and sole of the administration from 1774 to 1798 AD. From 1798 AD, Peshwa Bajirao II took the charge of the administration in his hands and once again the administration began to move around the Peshwa. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj suffered a lot in his entire career. The Chhatrapati was living as in captivity. Peshwa Bajirao II treated unfairly with the Chhatrapati unfairly.

10.1.8 Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj [1808 AD to 1818 AD (1848AD)]

In the early years of the reign of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj, Anandibai, mother of the Chhatrapati managed the administrative affairs at Satara. Peshwa Bajirao II gave very bad treatment to the Chhatrapati. The Chhatrapati and his family were living in Satara as in the house arrest of the Peshwa. Peshwa Bajirao II imprisoned the Chhatrapati and kept him in the fort of Vasota. “So, Pratapsinh Maharaj was in the imprisonment of the last Peshwa, Bajirao II.”⁷

In short, all the powers of the Maratha administration were with the Chhatrapati till the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. But the dominance of the Peshwas was increasing gradually. The Chhatrapatis were in the control of the Peshwa since the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. The Peshwas were the powerful till the downfall of the Maratha Empire. The Peshwas were the real head and the Chhatrapatis were the nominal head of the empire from the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj.

10.2. The Peshwa

The office of the Peshwa was an important office after the Chhatrapati. “The Mukhya Pradhan was referred as the Peshwa in the Muslim rule before the Maratha administration.”⁸ The Peshwa was the chief of all the Pradhans in the administration. The Peshwa was to assist the Chhatrapati to manage the administrative affairs. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj introduced a council of eight ministers which was called as the ‘Ashtpradhan Mandal’. The Peshwa was one of the eight ministers and head of all those. That’s why most of the times he was referred as Mukhya Pradhan or Prime Minister. “श्री राजाराम नरपति हर्षनिधान माधवराव बल्लाळ मुख्य प्रधान”⁹ Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj appointed Moropant Pingale in the office of the Peshwa. Since that time the office of the Peshwa came in the light. But, in fact, the office of the Peshwa was in existence before the appointment of Pingale in the office. “The Peshwaship was at Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar before Moropant Pingle.”¹⁰

There were six Peshwas in the Shiv Era till 1713 AD. Those were Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar, Moro Trimbak Pingle, Nilkanth Moreshwar Pingle, Parashram Trimbak Pratinidhi, Bahirao Moreshwar Pingle, and Balkrushna Vasudev. The duration of Parashram Trimbak Pratinidhi and Balkrushna Vasudev in the office of the Peshwa was very short. Therefore, not much is known about their career. A person named Mahadev¹¹ was in the office of the Peshwa for some period between the career of Shamraj Nilkanth and Moropant Pingle.

The office of the Peshwa got a lot of importance from the reign of Balaji Vishwanath. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed Balaji Vishwanath in the office of the Peshwa in 1713 AD. Because of his bravery and diplomacy, the office of the Peshwa became as important as the office of the Chhatrapati. After him, his son Bajirao I and grandson Balaji Bajirao were appointed in the office of Peshwa in 1720 AD and 1740 AD respectively. The Maratha kingdom was transformed into a vast empire and the office of the Peshwa became hereditary unknowingly during the career of these three Peshwas.

Balaji Bajirao (1740 AD to 1761 AD), his son Madhavrao I (1761 AD to 1772 AD), Madhavrao's brother Narayanrao (1772 AD to 1773 AD), Narayanrao's son Sawai Madhavrao (1774 AD to 1795 AD), Raghunathrao's younger son Chimnaji Appa (few days in 1795 AD) and at last Raghunathrao's elder son Bajirao II (1795 AD to 1818 AD) enjoyed the power of the office of Peshwaship and managed the administrative affairs of the Maratha Empire.

The Peshwas from 1713 AD made the office of Peshwa more important than the Chhatrapatis. That's why after 1749 AD the Peshwas became de facto and the Chhatrapatis became nominal head of the Maratha Empire.

Overall, Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao I, Balaji Bajirao and Madhavrao I created their influence in entire India with their efficiency, feat, bravery and victories. Balaji Vishwanath and Bajirao I were political expert and diplomatic. That's why for some period the political center of India was in Deccan and there was the influence of the Peshwas in the politics of India.

The secret of any successful empire is in the excellent administration. In this regard, the administration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai was the excellent administration. They had control over the administration, so the Peshwas were not so important. But in the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, the Chhatrapati as well as the Peshwas became an important part of the administration. Afterwards there was the control of only Peshwas and the Chhatrapati lost their control. The successors Madhavrao I, the Peshwas too could not control the administration any longer. Due to the lack of the proper administration the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa had to accept the dominance of the British. Finally, the downfall of the Maratha Empire took place. The Peshwa had to cede all the rights over the Maratha Empire and Chhatrapati became free from the control of the Peshwa, but unknowingly accepted the control of the British.

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Chapter II

The Role of Chhatrapatis in Shiv Era

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The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era

“He Hindavi Swaraj vhave he shreen chi ichha” the quote inspired Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and he established Swaraj in seventeenth century in the Maval region of Deccan and he transformed the Swaraj into ‘*suraaj*’ means a good state with the help of excellent administration. He not only established the Swaraj, but introduced good administration also. His administration was an ideal administration which is ideal in twenty first century also.

The country with the Hindu majority was controlled by Muslim rulers. The Mughals had established their dominance almost all over India. In front of Mughal army, handful army of Shivaji Maharaj was like a small hill in front of the Himalaya. Due to the organizational skills and excellent leadership he could fulfill the wish of his subject. Justice M.G. Ranade says. “Like the first Napoleon, Shivaji in his time was a great organizer and a builder of civil institutions, which conduced largely to the success of the movement initiated by him.”¹

The secret of the success of a ruler of an empire depends upon his excellent administration. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj involved all the people who were called as ‘Mavale’, in administration as per their ability considering all the obstacles in politics to expel contemporary despotic rulers and make the people of the state happy and prosperous in all respects. He didn’t impose his monarchy upon anyone in seventeenth century. He decentralized power in a way by establishing the Ashtpradhan Mandal on the occasion of his

coronation. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he decentralized power by setting up an Asht Pradhan Mandal, It can be observed through responses given by the subject to the king. The sardars of Maharaj always used to say that millions may die, but the leader of million must live. It indicates the importance of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and his administration. He gave priority to accomplishments and valour of the sardars, so he involved the people from all religions, castes and classes of twenty first century in his administration. That is why he is an ideal leader for the politician in the twenty-one century.

He created a great system of administration. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Tarabai made some changes as per the situation. Like, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj resumed the *vatandari* system, which was abrogated by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

2.1. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and His Administration

Shivaji Maharaj took the oath of Swaraj at Raireswar temple at an age of sixteen on 27 April 1645. It is said that he had cut his little finger and taken the oath by dripping blood onto the Shivlinga. The oath of Swaraj was an oath of freedom by Shivaji Maharaj. He motivated his followers, Mavale, to strive to attain their ideal of 'Hindavi Swaraj' which was an oath to refuse to live as slaves. Shivaji Raje dreamt of establishing a large empire. At a young age he founded a small army. He used guerilla warfare and captured many forts near Pune. The growing power of Shivaji Maharaj threatened the Bijapur. The king of Bijapur sent an army under Afzal Khan to crush the power of Shivaji Maharaj. At Pratapgad, Shivaji Maharaj kicked Khan and defeated the Bijapur army. Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor considered Shivaji a great threat. In

1663 AD he sent Shaista Khan to capture Shivaji Maharaj. One night the Maratha soldier under the leadership of Shivaji Maharaj attacked Shaista Khan and wounded him. After one year he raided and plundered Surat.

Aurangzeb sent Mirza Raje Jaisingh in Deccan. He besieged the fort of Purandar. Shivaji Maharaj agreed to sign peace treaty which was called the Treaty of Purandar. As per the treaty he surrendered twenty-three forts to Aurangzeb and agreed to meet him in his court in Agra. Aurangzeb humiliated him, so he left the court. Aurangzeb put him under house arrest. Shivaji Maharaj reached the Swaraj. In 1670 he renewed hostility with the Mughals. He raided Surat again and captured a huge booty. He also recaptured the forts which were surrendered earlier.

Shivaji Maharaj was crowned on 6th June 1674. He introduced a new system of revenue, army, forts, and administration. He introduced 'Rajmandal'. It means king and his court. "The concept of Rajmandal seems to have been born from Rakhtkhana of the pre- Shivaji period. Shivaji as a member of the Rakhtkhana of the Bijapur government knew its composition and after coronation seems to have copied it with such alteration as suited his policy of establishing an independent Maratha Raj."²

The Chhatrapati was the main part of the administration. The Chhatrapati was at center and administration moved around the Chhatrapati, which was the supreme authority. Shivaji Maharaj created an independent state and held the title of Chhatrapati at the time of coronation; Chhatrapati means one who gives refuge to his subjects, the successor of Shivaji Maharaj used the title before their name. "The canopy (*Chhatra*), which was held on the head of the King was the symbol of independence and sovereignty."³

Sovereignty means Chhatrapati's Swaraj did not accept the overlordship of any foreign rule. There was not the control of any other ruler over Swaraj. Many contemporary rulers of Shivaji Maharaj had accepted the overlordship of the Mughals. Some Indian rulers were vassals of the Mughals like the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj created a new history by establishing an independent and sovereign kingdom and formed an independent Hindu existence in the South.

2.1.1 Chhatrapati and Asht Pradhan Mandal

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj introduced the council of eight ministers which was known as the Asht Pradhan Mandal. "Ashtpradhan Mandal was an advisory body consisting of the highest officers of the state assisting the king in the discharging his duties and responsibilities."⁴ He divided the administration in different eight departments as per the requirement of seventeenth century. He appointed a minister as the head of the department which was known as 'Pradhan', so it was known as the 'Ashtpradhan'. "It shows that the commander-in-chief or senapati was given the responsibility of military system and the rest of the Pradhans was given the responsibility of maintaining the state or civil affairs."⁵

The Ashtpradhan Mandal was created to assist the Chhatrapatis in administration and to give advice, if needed. The important thing was that the Chhatrapati was not bound to the advice of the ministers. It was the Chhatrapati, who was entirely and wholly responsible to decide the policies of the state. Only Chhatrapati could appoint or remove the ministers in Ashtpradhan Mandal. "He removed the first Peshwa (Shamraj Nilkanth

Ranjekar) from Peshwaship and gave the authority of Peshwaship to Moropant Pingle. He also replaced Pant Amatya.”⁶

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was very strict with the discipline of Ashtpradhan Mandal. If any Pradhan violated discipline or neglected at his duty, he was removed immediately from his respective post. The conflicts between Chhatrapati and Senapati were often seen always in the history of the Marathas. Senapati Netaji Palkar shirked at the important movement at the time of Panhala case and to add this he behaved rudely. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj didn't wait for a moment also and removed Palkar from the office of Commander-in-Chief immediately. The same incident took place with senapati Prataprao Gujar. “When Bahlolkhan was found in clutches, how could he go safely? Chhatrapati scolded him. The scolding was like death sentence for self-respecting Prataprao.”⁷

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj discontinued the Vatandari system. He began to pay salary to the Pradhans in the council. It was the radical change in the administration. He didn't offer Jahagiri to any Pradhan. He was aware of the disadvantages of the Jagirdari system. The Jagirdars used to exploit the subject under the name of revenue collection. To eradicate such an exploitation of the subject he discontinued the vatandari system and paid the cash salary to the ministers. “The system, which was started by the so-called modernized British in 1839, was introduced by our Shivchhatrapati before 175 years ago in Maharashtra.”⁸

The British followed the salary, payment in cash system for their officials. In the same way Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj gave up the Vatandari system and used the salary system. He didn't follow the tradition which had

been following by many rulers in India. “Everyone from the Peshwa and Senapati down to the lowest sepoy or karkun was, under Shivaji’s arrangements, directed to draw his salary in cash from the public treasury and granaries.”⁹ He opposed the system to make Jamindar by offering Jamin or land. The rights, which zamindar or Inamadar got, were misused by these authorities. If the jagir was hereditary, the family used to dominate the region as the king. Sometime it resulted into the declaration of independence by the jagirdars from central rule and foundation of a new kingdom. Many times the king had to face many problems to get back the conferred jagir.

Every Pradhan and minister were given the cash payment. “Initially the annual payment of the Peshwa was 7000 Hon. According to present calculations, if one Hon is considered as Rs. 800, then the salary will be Rs. 56 Lakhs.”¹⁰ Afterwards it was increased. 15000 Hons for Peshwa, 12000 Hons for Mujumdar, 10000 Hons for other ministers were fixed.

2.1.2 The Vrutti System

Though Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had discontinued the Vatandari system, he had continued the ‘Vrutti’ system. The main difference between ‘vatan’ and ‘vrutti’ was that the land which was granted as a ‘vatan’ was given compensated for the government service, “but the land given as a Vrutti was mainly a gift from the king as a meant for subsistence.”¹¹ ‘Vrutti’ was only mean of subsistence. The owner didn’t have any rights like Vatandar on his vatan. The concept of vrutti was used generally for the land which was given for religious purpose. All the rights were with the Chhatrapati to continue, to discontinue or to transfer the ‘Vrutti’. A letter reveals this fact. In 1679 AD Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj wrote a letter to Deshmukh and Deshpande of

Pune and ordered that the Vrutti should be continued after the adoption of a son by Antaji Babaji. He wrote in that, “Vishwanath (adoptive son of Babaji Anant) of Purush Gotra is enjoying Vrutti. It can create conflict or humiliation as he is an adopted son. No need to humiliate. He will serve the ‘vrutti’ hereditary.”¹² Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had conferred the ‘Vriitis’ from Kikvi, Kejal, Pande, Sawardare, Rajapur, Nirthadi.

The Chhatrapati was the supreme in judicial system. Nyayadhish and Panditrao in Ashtpradhan had been appointed for the judicial affairs, but the supreme power in judicial system was with the Chhatrapati. He used to ask to for advice Nyaydhish, Panditrao in judicial matters, but their advice was not mandatory to Chhatrapati.

2.2. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and Administration

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj laid the foundation of the Maratha Empire. He was crowned as the Chhatrapati on 6 June 1674 and became the sovereign ruler. He died on 3 April 1680 after the six years of the coronation. His elder son, Prince Sambhaji, succeeded him. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj got very short period of nine years. Though the reign was short, he gave his best as an administrator and ruler. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj’s role in administration was like his father, but a bit aggressive than him.

At the time of coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Prince Sambhaji was involved in the coronation to perform all the rituals. In a way, it can be said that the role of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to select Sambhaji as a prince to perform all the rituals of coronation was to choose his successor. Prince Sambhaji was declared as the future Chhatrapati by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. However, after his death, there was a lot of politics over the

succession. Soyarabai, wife of Shivaji Maharaj and step mother of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj conspired against Sambhaji along with some of the Pradhans and sardars and made sure that Sambhaji should not get the news of the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. They wanted to keep away Sambhaji from throne. To succeed in their conspiracy, they tried to tarnish Sambhaji's image. She made many attempts to show Sambhaji to the people and sardars of Swaraj through her conspired eyes. She did 'Manchakarohan' of her son, Rajaram immediately after the ten days of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's death only to prevent Sambhaji from succeeding the throne, News of Shivaji Maharaj's death was purposefully concealed from Sambhaji through conspiracy.

When Sambhaji got the news, he started his preparation and took possession of the Panhala fort. He also took the help of Pilajirao Shirke, his father-in-law. Soyarabai tightened the security of Raigad. She made a plan to capture and imprisoned him. "Annajipant Surnis did 'Manchakarohan' of Rajaram on Vaishakh Shuddh Tritiya. Moropant and he marched towards Panhala fort to capture Sambhaji."¹³

Ashtpradhan Mandal was involved in the conspiracy except Hambirrao Mohite, Commander-in-chief. He knew that only Sambhaji deserved the throne. He was the brother of Soyarabai and the maternal uncle of Rajaram. Annaji and Moropant came to arrest Sambhaji. Hambirrao refused and arrested both of them. On the next day Hambirrao along with his senior generals Rupaji Bhosale and Anandrao Makaji met Sambhaji at Panhala. Sambhaji was delighted at the arrival of Hambirrao Mohite on his side. He asked Pilajirao Shirke to secure Raigad with a force of ten thousand. Pilajirao secured the control of Raigad fort. Rajaram, his mother Soyarabai and all the

senior ministers involved in the conspiracy were put under house arrest. “He formally ascended the throne (manchakarohan) on Shravan Shuddh Panchami Shake 1602 means 20 July 1680.”¹⁴ His coronation took place on 16 January 1681 with all the holy rituals.

2.2.1 Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and Asht Pradhan

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had appointed eight ministers in his Ashtpradhan Mandal to facilitate the administration. These eight ministers assisted the Chhatrapati in the administration. They used to perform their duties as per the orders of the king. The Pradhans advised the Chhatrapati if needed, but Pradhans’ advice was not mandatory to Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj made some changes in the council of ministers. “Whichever changes were made; it was as if the Ashta pradhan Mandal was removed from the administration or their responsibilities were taken away.”¹⁵ The political condition was responsible for that. The ministers were against Sambhaji Maharaj except Mohite. As per the tradition he was the successor of his father, but the pillars of Swaraj i.e. the Pradhans conspired against him and prevented him from becoming the king. So, it was natural to give punishment to all those ministers. Some of them were kept under house arrest and some were removed from their offices. Being a Chhatrapati his decisions were absolutely right. “The courage and bravery shown by Sambhaji in his coronation by directly attacking Raigad with the support of some of the people and setting aside the ministers was really suitable to a prince who was legal successor of the state.”¹⁶ “It cannot be said that he did wrong; and if he had punished anyone on that occasion, it must be assumed that it was done as per the human nature.”¹⁷

Chhatrapati Sambhaji had imprisoned some of the ministers and sardars before his coronation who were involved in conspiracy against Sambhaji Maharaj. After some days of coronation, he released the ministers and sardars with respect. Not only released, but some of them were appointed on previous posts or new posts. “Moropant Pingle had died while in captivity”¹⁸ Chhatrapati Sambhaji had a lot of respect for Moropant. He was aware of the loyalty of Moropant towards Chhatrapati Shivaji and Swaraj. So, he appointed Moropant’s son Nilopant as Peshwa. He knew that Annaji Datto was one of the main leaders in the conspiracy against him, but he forgot everything and he appointed Annaji Datto as Amatya. Pralhad Niraji was appointed as Nyayadhish. Balaji Awaji was continued as Chitnis. “The critics intentionally neglect the forgiveness, generosity, greatness of heart of Chhatrapati Sambhaji and blame that he could not win the heart of people earned by the Shivaji with lot of efforts.”¹⁹

2.2.2 The Office of the Chhandogamatya

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj appointed ministers in Ashtpradhan. He introduced a new office in his reign and that was ‘Chhandogamatya’. Kavi Kalasha was appointed as Chhandogamatya. He was very close to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Some sardars were planning conspiracy against the king after coronation too. Though he had appointed them on the higher posts, still they were against the king. The big question was who to trust at such times, so he involved his close friend Kavi Kalash into administration. “The role of ministers in Ashtpradhan was responsible for the rise of Kavi Kalasha in the administration. That is why he bestowed the title ‘Chhandogamatya’ upon Kavi Kalash.”²⁰ Kavi Kalash got the ‘Kulyekhtiyari’ at Raigad. “Kavi Kalasha got the importance due to Kulyekhtiyari like Peshwa in Ashtpradhan.”²¹ The

appointment indicates that Kavi Kalash got the importance and authority in such a way that he became an official with the power of Peshwa. The Peshwa was the chief in council of ministers and had a lot of power after the Chhatrapati. During the period of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Kavi Kalasha got the importance after the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa was mere an official in the office of Peshwa. The selections and the appointments show that Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj also had control over the Ashtpradhan Mandal like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The power of appointments, terminations, introduction of new offices in administration were in the hands of Chhatrapati.

Asht Pradhan Mandal was an important body in the administration but as the Pradhans lost the faith Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj downplayed the importance of the Ashtpradhan Mandal and increased the importance of Kavi Kalasha by appointing him as a Chhandogamatya. No Pradhan could oppose the decision of Chhatrapati. It indicates that the Chhatrapati was the supreme in the administration. “No one dared to go in front of Sambhaji except Chhandogamatya Kalusha, so most of the works were done according to Kalusha.”²²

2.2.3 Sakhiradnyee Sachiv

An important role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji in terms of administration was that he involved his wife Yesubai in the administration. He had handed over the responsibility of civil administration to Yesubai. There was separate stamp for civil affairs. “On the stamp, Yesubai had used the title ‘Sakhiradnyee Sachiv’ for herself.”²³ It was the revolutionary experiment. Jijabai had a lot of importance in the administration in the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, but her role was limited to give advice. She was not given

any kind of post or administrative responsibility. Chhatrapati Sambhaji had set a new standard by including women in the administration. “Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj gave an administrative post to Yesubai and added the right to look after the administration in his absence.” ²⁴

2.2.4 Rajmudra

Like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had created his own ‘Rajmudra’ (authentic stamp or royal seal). He used the stamp or Rajmudra on administrative documents. It was as following:

“श्री शंभोः शिवजातस्य मुद्राद्यौरिव राजते ।

यदं कसेविनी लेखा वतर्ते कस्यनोपरी ।।” ²⁵

It means the Mudra or seal of Shivaji’s son Sambhaji shines as the sun and the patron of the mudra rule over anyone.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj denoted through his mudra that the Swaraj is for the welfare of the subject. In the same way Chhatrapati Sambhaji also expressed through his mudra the same message as his father as well as he told other kingdoms that he was a sovereign.

2.2.5. The Vatandars

The early years of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj were spent on recognizing who was faithful and who was a traitor. He had to face many conspiracies against him. The state was in critical condition. There was threat of conspiracies against the Swaraj by some of the ministers, pradhans, vatandars, sardars taking advantage of the internal instability in the state. Sambhaji Raje had maintained good relations with the all the vatandars in

such dire situation and tightened his grip on the administration”²⁶ Prof. Shinde Sarkar says, “Chhatrapati Sambhaji had a strange rage in his mind about the vatandars joining the enemy. If any defector vatandar return in swaraj, he used to express his intense anger on him.”²⁷

2.2.6 The Control over the Sardars

There are many instances about the strict actions taken against violators the regulations in administration by Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Sometimes he dismissed the officer and appointed an efficient person. The subhedar of Dicholi was very tyrant. Portuguese viceroy wrote a letter to Chhatrapati Sambhaji. He took strict action against the Subhedar. The Viceroy wrote to the ambassador of Chhatrapati Yesaji Gambhirrao and informed about the action of Chhatrapati.

“Your letter has been received you informed to Sambhaji Raje about the persecution of Subhedar Moro Dadaji of Dicholi. He removed the Subhedar and appointed Shivaji Badnaik. After getting this news, I was convinced that he wanted reconciliation between the two states.”²⁸

The letter shows that the Chhatrapati took action against his own people if they violated the rules and gave justice to other people. He removed the subhedar and appointed new one only for the better relationship between two states. He informed to the viceroy of Portuguese about this change.

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj looked after the Swaraj and administration successfully which was founded by his father with a lot of effort. Some historians have blamed Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj that he could not look after the kingdom effectively but various documents, letters

show that he handled the administrative, political, economic and foreign affairs successfully and skillfully. He protected the Swaraj from the foreign enemies. The Portuguese were one of the enemies of Swaraj. There a was threat to Maratha kingdom from them, so he showed the Maratha power to the Portuguese by continuous attacks on them. It can be proved through this letter.

“Hon. Viceroy presented the information to the council that the army of enemy Sambhaji has entered in our all states.”²⁹

The secretary of viceroy of Portuguese wrote about the attack by Sambhaji Raje in a letter which was written on 24 November 1683. He wrote that the army of Sambhaji Raje has wreaked havoc in the states of Portuguese. It shows that Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had threatened the enemy, but on the other hand when a Sardar from Swaraj misused the power and threatened the same enemy in the name of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, he removed such sardars from the office. It shows the seriousness of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj about the administration. Dr. Kamal Gokhale says in this regard, “Sambhaji Raje also was at the center of government. He was also the head of the judiciary, who made laws on the basis of different religions and was the head of army. He was a security of health and stability for the people of different religions,”³⁰

The administrative system created by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was weakened due to the internal power struggle in the beginning of Sambhaji Raje’s reign, but was not destroyed. He recovered the disintegrated administration as before and rebuilt it. He was of the view that it was his duty to carry on and enhance the discipline and politics imposed by his father

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Like his father, he had taken all the rights to himself. “The time to exercise these rights came in the first year his career.”³¹

P. J. Joshi says, “Taking into account the data given earlier it is clear that even though Sambhaji was a good administrator and a skilled general, who gave impartial justice to the subject.”³²

Though Chhatrapati Sambhaji got very short period as a ruler, he secured the Maraha Swaraj from the invasions of enemies like Mughals and Portuguese. It is said that if the enemy is very strong, but the ministers and officers are loyal towards the king, he can easily defeat the strong enemy. Chhatrapati Sambhaji had to face the external as well as internal enemies. Even so, he defended the kingdom for nine years in the face of foreign enemies. This is a quality of an excellent ruler. Though there were conspiracies by ministers, sardars against him, he faced strongest enemy Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb had conquered many Indian kingdoms within a short period, but only because of Chhatrapati Sambhaji he took nine years to get victory over swaraj. But this was an ephemeral victory. After the eighteen years of execution of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Aurangzeb died in 1707 AD, but he could not conquer the Swaraj.

2.3. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and His Administration

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and his advisers were captured by the Mughal forces in a skirmish at Sangameshwar in February 1689. When Yesubai, wife of Sambhaji got the news of capturing of Sambhaji at Raigarh, immediately she called all the important sardars together. “She did *Manchakarohan* of her younger brother-in-law i.e. Rajaram and declared him as a new chief of Maratha Swaraj .”³³

Rajaram was declared as chief of Maratha kingdom unexpectedly and surprisingly. After the death of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Rajaram was crowned as Chhatrapati on 12 March 1689 at Raigarh. When he became Chhatrapati, the condition of Maratha kingdom was very critical. Chhatrapati Sambhaji had been executed. Mughal army had begun laying siege to the region around Raigarh. The Chhatrapati had been executed, so whole Maratha kingdom was in panic and terror. There were continuous attacks of Mughal army over Swaraj. In such situation it was difficult to run the administration. As G. S. Sardesai called him '*sthirbuddhi Rajaram*' means stable minded Rajaram, he handled the situation very skillfully with his calm, stable and sober nature and played important role in administration of Maratha.

There was a threat of Mughal army to the new Chhatrapati also as it was for Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. So, Maharani Yesubai and her minister Ramachandrapant Amatya sent young Chhatrapati to the stronghold Pratapgad and from that place he escaped to the fort of Jinji, in present day state of Tamil Nadu. Afterwards Raigarh was captured by the Mughals. "Sambhaji's wife and children (Yesubai and Shahu and Madansing) and a few other people were imprisoned in the cantonment of the Mughal."³⁴ The capital of Marathas was in the possession of the Mughals. The Chhatrapati was staying in Jinji, so it got the status of capital. He began to look after the administration of Swaraj from Jinji.

2.3.1. Changes According to the Situation

Like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj also made some changes in administration according to the situation and introduced new offices also. "Chhatrapati

Rajaram Maharaj reached Jinji on 2 November 1689.”³⁵ “He escaped from Jinji and reached safely at Vishalgad in November in 1697.”³⁶ It means he was in Jinji for eight nearly years. He looked after the administration from fort Jinji. Before leaving for Jinji, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj played an important role in administration. He was aware that Jinji was far away from Swaraj, so it was very difficult to run the administration from such a distant place.

He handed over the responsibility of the administration of Swaraj to Ramchandrapant Amatya and Shankarajipant. “He ordered that Santaji under the guidance of Ramchandrapant and Dhanaji under the guidance of Shankarajipant would take care of the defense.”³⁷ With these initial appointments Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj showed in the beginning of his career itself that an administrative system could be managed properly by him. He bestowed the title of 'Hukumatpanha' on Ramchandrapant Amatya and 'Rajadnya' on Shankarajipant, which indicated all the rights to look after the administration and the powers of the king respectively. Chhatrapati Rajaram began to carry out the responsibilities of administration of Swaraj at the mere age of twenty years. He conferred the various titles on various sardars to run the government smoothly and gave different responsibilities.

2.3.2. The Asht Pradhan Mandal

Ashtpradhan Mandal or council of eight ministers had a lot of importance in the administration. “Like the first two Chhatrapatis, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj also proclaimed his Ashtpradhan in April 1690.”³⁸ In that Nilopant Pingale, Peshwa; Shankaraji Narayan, Sachiv; Janardanpant Hanumante, Amatya; Shri Shankaracharya Kagalgaonkar, Panditrao;

Ramchandra Punde, Mantri; Mahadji Gadadhar, Sumant; Khando Ballal, Chitnis; Khanderao Pansambal, Senapati were included.

2.3.3. Introduction of New Offices

Along with Ashtpradhan, which was introduced by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj introduced new office 'Chhandogamatya' and appointed Kavi Kalash. In the same way Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj introduced a new post called 'Pantpratinidhi'. Rajmandala, Raja and Ashtpradhan were the core of administration. "Afterwards Pratinidhi or Viceroy was added during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram."³⁹ He had to look after the administration at a very young age. He needed the cooperation and guidance of capable and accomplished Sardars. So he made them part of administration, though there were clashes between them and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Forgetting all the disputes, Chhatrapati involved everyone in the administration. Even he created a new office like Pantpratinidhi in accordance to the situation. Pralhad Niraji was appointed as Pantpratinidhi. "Pralhad Niraji had played an important role in administration and defended the fort of Jinji during the siege, so he was appointed as a Pantpratinidhi."⁴⁰

He never disappointed anyone in the administration, because he knew that each and everyone's participation was important to overcome the crisis like Aurangzeb and his force and to run the administration smoothly. The realization of this fact comes from one incident. Intact Chhatrapati wanted to appoint Dhanaji as commander-in-chief, *Senapati*, but Ramachandrapant convinced the Chhatrapati to appoint Santaji as Senapati. "As Chhatrapati had a lot of respect for Pant, so he could not reject his request."⁴¹ This incident indicates that Chhatrapati wanted to appoint Dhanaji as Senapati or it was his

decision, but he didn't want to hurt the most experienced senior sardar in administration like Ramchandrapant Amatya, so the Chhatrapati changed his decision only for Ramchandrapant. The Chhatrapati was not bound to act as per the advice or request of Pradhans and other officials. However, he respected the request of Ramchandrapant and acted as per his wish in the given circumstances as "he was responsible for the defense the territories in Maharashtra."⁴² It was an important role of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj in the administration.

2.3.4. Swaraj Policy

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj had noble thoughts about the throne of Chhatrapati as everyone should be proud of him. He always said to his Pradhans and, nobles that he was not the real owner of the Swaraj, but Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj's son Shahu was the real master. He was the de facto owner of the throne of Chhatrapati. He knew that only due to the sudden death of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj he was made king unexpectedly. He got the throne, as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj's son was small, so he never became selfish. He often reminded himself and the nobles that Shahu was the real head of the Swaraj. In this context one letter is important.

"चिरंजीव (शाहूराज) कलेकरुन तरी श्री देशी आणील तेंव्हा संकटी जी माणसे उपयोगी पडली त्यांच्या तशनसी आम्ही करविल्या..... ते (शाहूराजे) मुख्य सर्व राज्यास अधिकारी आम्ही करितो तरी त्या साठीच आहे. प्रसंगी सर्व लोकांस तिकडेच (शाहुराजांकडेच) पाहणे येईलव (त्याप्रो) वागतील हे कारण ईश्वरी नेमले आहे."⁴³

Soyarabai, mother of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj, tried a lot to make Rajaram the Chhatrapati throughout her life. She made conspiracies against

prince Sambhaji to succeed the throne for her son, but Rajaram got the throne surprisingly after the death of Chhatrapati Sambhaji. It was a great victory for Rajaram. However, selfless Rajaram was never proud of the throne which he got. “He looked after the throne and Swaraj as a trustee. Shahu had original rights to the throne.”⁴⁴

It shows the depth of Chhatrapati Rajaram's thoughts. He was just like in Bharat in Ramayana. Kaikayi, his mother, plotted against Ram and sent him to *vanavasa* for 14 years to make Bharata the king of Ayodhya. Bharta was an ideal brother. He never enjoyed the throne of Ayodhya. He lived out of Ayodhya as a sage and looked after administration as a representative of Shri Ram. When Shri Ram returned after *vanavasa*, Bharata handed over the throne to him. Just like that as Shahu was in the confinement of Mughals who was entitled to the throne. So, Chhatrapati Rajaram ran the administration as a representative of Prince Shahu.

2.3.5. The Ambition to Conquer Delhi

The Mughal army was in Maharashtra. It was the political disaster for Swaraj. Everyone was trying to overthrow the enemy from the Swaraj. At the same time, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was planning something beyond the protection of the kingdom from Mughal army. He had a strong determination not only to secure the Swaraj, but also to conquer Delhi. The proof for that is a letter written by Chhatrapati to Hanmantrao Ghorpade and Krishnarao Ghorpade on 4 June 1691. The Chhatrapati wrote in that letter

“62500 Saranjam after the possession of the Raigad

62500 Should be given after conquering Bijapur

62500	after conquering Bhaganagar
62500	after conquering of Aurangabad
250000	after conquering Delhi” ⁴⁵

Chhatrapati Rajaram granted the saranjam of five Lakhs and one Lakh to Hanmantrao and Krishnrao respectively, but to get that saranjam he gave certain steps. The important task was given by the Chhatrapati. They had to conquer first Raigad, afterwards Vijapur, Bhaganagar, Aurangabad and at finally Delhi. Such a planning was made by the Chhatrapati. Here an important point is that the Mughal army was in Swaraj. It was very difficult to defeat them, but Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was thinking beyond that. He wanted to conquer Raigad, Bijapur and overthrow the Mughal army, but along with this he was planning to conquer Delhi too. It proves Chhatrapati's courage and foresightedness. He wanted to fulfill the dream of his father and brother to overthrow the rule of the Mughals from Delhi.

2.3.6. The Resumption of Vatandari system

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj did one more change in the administration. He resumed the system which was stopped by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and that was the Vatandari system. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj knew the flaws and disadvantages of vatandari system, that is why he didn't follow it, but his son resumed this system.

It had been resumed intentionally. There were many reasons behind it. Infact it was the necessity of the situation. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was at Jinji. There was a critical condition in the Swaraj. The continuous invasions of Mughals in Swaraj had disturbed the state. Aurangzeb was trying to distract

the Maratha sardars by offering the vatans. He wanted to weaken the Maratha kingdom so that it would be conquered easily. It was dangerous for the Swaraj. “Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj thought that the Swaraj, which was established by his father and protected by his brother, should not be lost by him. So, he began to offer vatanas again.”⁴⁶

Many historians have criticized Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj for resuming the Vatandari system, but he recognized the situation at the time and resumed the Vatandari system. So, his decision was absolutely right. The participation of each and every person was important in the task of protection of the Swaraj from the Mughal invasions. Sardars should not be disappointed, so he offered the vatans to them and tied them to a thread of the Swaraj. Nagoji Mane, Nemanji Shinde, Mankoji Pandhare, Hanmantrao Nimbalkar, Babaji Dafle etc. returned in the Swaraj from Mughals due to vatandari system. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj conferred the vatans not only upon the sardars, but upon their family members also. A letter, which was written on 21 June 1693, shows that the Chhatrapati had granted the vatan. “Rajashri Ramchandra Nilkanth Amatya served the king and showed loyalty. He did a lot of hard work for the state and won the pleasure. So, the king was pleased and offers his wife and daughter the vatan of two districts.”⁴⁷

Ramchandrapant Amatya was doing his best for the Swaraj. The Chhatrapati knew that only because of Ramchandrapant Amatya he was able to run the administration from Jinji. So to express his gratitude towards him, he conferred the vatans of Murbad and Kadwa upon Jankibai, his wife and Chiranjiv Thakubai, his daughter respectively. The Chhatrapati made the vatans hereditary. “These two villages should be entrusted to both of them and it should be hereditary. Don’t expect a new letter every year.”⁴⁸ It

indicates that these two vatans were given hereditary and he ordered not to expect new letters of renovation of the vatans. It means that it was permanent.

2.3.7 The Control Over the Sardars

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj carried out the responsibility of Swaraj as Chhatrapati very successfully. He was not so much strict like his father and brother. He motivated and inspired the sardars and subject with his calm, abstemious, self-disciplined qualities. He always respected the seniority, bravery, greatness of Maratha sardars and governed with patience. Santaji Ghorpade was unique personality as a commander-in-chief. Bravery was as in his sword itself. Some incidents created disputes between Chhatrapati and Santaji. Chhatrapati made him understand and consoled him for twice. When Santaji repeated his mistake for the third time, Chhatrapati took strict action and dismissed him from the office of commander-in-chief. Chhatrapati wrote a letter to Ramchandrapant Amatya on 27 October 1696 and informed, “Santaji Ghorpade showed his dishonesty at the feet of the King, so he was removed from the office of Senapati.”⁴⁹

Same incident took place during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. “At the time of invasion of Panhala, Netaji Palkar shirked at the eleventh hour and behaved rudely. So, as a punishment, Shivaji Maharaj removed him from the office.”⁵⁰

When we compare these two incidents, we come to know that Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj didn't remove immediately from the office. Perhaps he might have thought that it would be not right to disappoint sardars. The Swaraj was facing external crisis already. The internal crisis would have caused the dangerous disaster. So, the Chhatrapati consoled him twice. If a

sardar is committing mistakes frequently and king is not taking strict action, it shows the weakness of the king. So Chhatrapati Rajaram dismissed Santaji Ghorpade, a brave warrior, from his office of the Commander-in-chief.

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj looked after the Swaraj very carefully, handled the administration. He always motivated the sardars, people to fight for the Swaraj. He didn't let the Mughal army to get success in the Maratha kingdom. This is the greatest success of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj.

2.4. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II and the Administration and the Regency of Maharani Tarabai

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj ruled over Swaraj nearly eleven years. “Unfortunately, his health didn't support him and he died on 2 March 1700 AD at Sinhagad.”⁵¹ Aurangzeb was still in Swaraj. His army was after the Maratha king. He was in the Swaraj since 1681. He executed Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj in 1689 and it was a big shock to the Maratha Kingdom. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj's untimely demise in 1700 AD was another shock to the subject. Along with the people and sardars this was a great shock and she was Maharani Tarabai, wife of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj. Her role in the Maratha administration made her an idol of motivation and inspiration in history. She was very brave and courageous woman so instead of mourning on her husband's death she proclaimed Shivaji II, her son as a Chhatrapati. “After the death of Rajeshri Rajaram Chhatrapati Rajeshri Shivaji Raje ascended the throne at Vishalgad (10 March 1700 AD).”⁵²

Maharani Tarabai's age was mere twenty-five when Chhatrapati Rajaram died. There was an important task before her to protect the Maratha Swaraj from Aurangzeb. When the Mughals received the news of the death of

Rajaram Maharaj, they were delighted and congratulated each other saying that another powerful obstacle was removed. It would not be difficult to overcome the new king as he was very small and his two helpless mothers. They thought the enemy had become weak, but it was their misunderstanding. Tarabai, mother of new minor Chhatrapati took firm stand and renewed the energy among the people. She exhibited the great power of command and administration and proved the bravery of Maratha people to the Mughal army. Khafikhan said, “The qualities of Tarabai’s army leadership and campaign management were revealed intensely. Therefore, the invasions and activities of Marathas increased day by day.”⁵³

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II was only four years old. Tarabai became the regent of her minor son and governed on his behalf. Like Mughal army some Maratha sardars also thought that there was the end of Maratha rule with the death of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj. Maharani Tarabai proved that it was the wrong belief. She became the chief of Maratha kingdom. Though she was very young compared to the other sardars in terms of age, political and administrative experience; but her ambitions and determination was very strong than these sardars. It was her resolution to protect the Maratha kingdom from the Mughal army at any cost. That is why she took over the reins of the government. Dhadphale’s yaadi, which was published in a quarterly of Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal gives witness of the fact. “Younger Shivaji Raje, son of Rajaram and Tarabai, ruled after the death of Rajaram. The whole administration was run by Tarabai.”⁵⁴

She was daughter of Hambirrao Mohite, Commander-in-chief of Maratha army; daughter-in-law of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Sister-in-law of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and wife of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj,

so she had got knowledge of administration since her childhood and her leadership was nourished after her marriage. By the age of twenty-five she had acquired all the qualities of a brave, capable, efficient administrator and leader. After the coronation of her son, Shivaji II, she also introduced Rajmudra or the royal seal of her son and used it on royal Framans, letters etc. The Rajmudra is found on the letter written to Girjoji Yadav,

“प्रतिपच्चंद्र लेखेव वर्धिष्णूर्विश्ववंदिता |

श्रामसुनो शिवस्यैषा मुद्रा भद्रा विराजते ||”⁵⁵

The Rajmudra of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj created a unique identity of Chhatrapati among other kingdoms. In the same way Maharani Tarabai also established the power of her son with the Rajmudra and brought all the scattered sardars under one roof. She tried to establish dignity for her minor son and she became successful too. It could be seen in the war of independence between 1700 and 1707 AD.

2.4.1 The Vatandari System

The vatandari system which was abolished by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and resumed by Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was continued by Tarabai. She also thought as her husband that the Maratha Sardars should be in swaraj. They should not be attracted towards the temptations offered by the Mughals. Whichever vatans were given by Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj were continued by her. Even she offered new vatans in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. Raghoji Rautrao Dhamale Deshmukh was conferred vatan by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and ordered to continue it as hereditary. Chhatrapati wrote on 18 August 1701. “(Raghoji) would be in

service of king and show loyalty, so the king mercifully conferred the vatan and hoped to serve faithfully..... It should be enjoyed by son, grandson as a hereditary.”⁵⁶

Raghoji Dhamale had given his best. He was loyal towards the king, so he was conferred vatan and king ordered him to be loyal to the Swaraj in future also. Ramchandra Nilkanth Amatya also showed his excellent accomplishment in the service of swaraj, so in the honor of his work Tarabai conferred a vatan Seloli village upon his son, Bhagwantrao and ordered to continue it hereditary. “Rajashri Bhagwantrao Ramchndra, son of Rajshri Ramchandra Pandit Amatya was conferred the village Seloli Taluka Khanapur for milk and rice by the King mercifully.”⁵⁷

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj had given the vatan to his wife and daughter of Ramchndrapant Amatya. Similarly, Tarabai also gave the Vatan to his son. It shows that Tarabai was aware that everyone needed to be united, so to give vatans was the only solution.

2.4.2 Control Over the Sardars

There were some incidents of dispute between Chhatrapati and commander-in-chief of Maratha army. There were arguments between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Netaji Palkar, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Santaji Ghorpade. They took strict actions against the senapatis. Similar incident took place between Maharani Tarabai and Dhanaji Jadhav, commander-in-chief. Tarabai took a firm stand on the incident and she ruled against commander-in-chief. The donation in the temple of Lord Khandoba at Paali was known as '*dabee*'. Dhanaji Jadhav and Girjoji Yadav claimed the *dabee*. The dispute between Jadhav and Yadav escalated to the point that

Maharani Tarabai had to interfere in the matter. Girjoji, though he was an important sardar in Swaraj, was subordinate to Dhanaji. During the war of independence, generals like Dhanaji Jadhav were much needed. It was not in the favor of the state to disappoint him. “However, Tarabai defended the rights of Girjoji despite Dhanaji’s rage.”⁵⁸ Here Tarabai’s absolute role could be seen. She ruled against commander-in-chief. It indicates that Tarabai followed the rule of law. Everyone is equal before the law, though the person is on the high position. She didn’t give her decision against the commander-in-chief, but she supported the right person. These are the excellent qualities of an outstanding ruler.

2.4.5 Maharani Tarabai’s Swaraj Policy

She took the same strong stand at the time of coronation of her son, Shivaji II. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj’s death was a political disaster for Tarabai. She decided to make her son, Shivaji II the king. She shared her views with other ministers. Ramchandra pant Amatya suggested that when Shahu, son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj would be released, he would be crowned. After listening this suggestion, she replied furiously, “It doesn’t mean that Shahu Raje is a king and Shivaji Raje is a thief. It is my duty to perform thread ceremony of Shivaji Raja.”⁵⁹

The pradhans were helpless before furious Tarabai. They could not resist the Tarabai’s wish. Ramchandra Amatya, the senior and experienced person in the administration also had to withdraw his suggestion. It proved that the king was not abiding the advice of minister. It was mandatory for the ministers to follow the order of Chhatrapati.

Tarabai motivated and inspired the Maratha sardars to fight together against Mughals. She was leading the administration since the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj. “Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj founded one Raj Mandal of Maratha sardars like Ramchandrapant Amatya, Shankaraji Narayan, Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav under the leadership of Tarabai before leaving for Karnataka.”⁶⁰ This means Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj also knew the leadership qualities of his wife. That is why he gave her the reins of Swaraj. It was the pinion of Aurangzeb that easily he would easily get victory over Maratha kingdom and it would come under the control of Mughal Empire, but it was his overconfidence. In front of the skillful leadership and strong resolution of Tarabai, that confidence turned out to be false. In the absence of strong leadership for lakhs of army, the chances of victory are very less. It means for victory a best leadership is required. Tarabai had an outstanding leadership quality that is why the Maratha army could confront bravely the Mughals for seven years. Khafikhan says, “She was intelligent and wise. During her husband’s lifetime she became famous for her military management and administration.”

During the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, a lot of importance was given to the advice of Jijabai, but she was not holding any administrative post. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj handed over the civil affairs to his wife Yesubai. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj appointed Tarabai as the head of Maratha Rajmandal. There was lot of importance for woman in administration, but Chhatrapati were dominant. These women were subordinate to the Chhatrapatis. The condition was not the same during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. Tarabai was regent of her minor son, so naturally all the reins of the administration were under her control. Tarabi

appeared as a volcano in front of Mughal army. She was the first lady regent in the Maratha administration. Noorjahan also looked after the Mughal administration on the behalf of her husband, Jahangir Salim. Tarabai also did her best for the Maratha Swaraj, but she was more accomplished than Noorjahan as she had to face Mughal army along with controlling the administration. She protected the Maratha kingdom like her brother-in-law and husband. She was considered as Bhadrakali Bhavani, an incarnation of Durga who was the Goddess of power, strength. Devdatta, a contemporary poet during the period of Tarabai, wrote about her,

दिल्ली झाली दिनवानी

दिल्लीशाचे गेले पाणी

ताराबाई रामराणी

भद्रकाली कोपली ।।

रामराणी भद्रकाली

रणरंगी कुध्द झाली

प्रलयाची वेळ आली

मुघल हो सांभाळा ।।⁶¹

As the Scattered beads are stringed in one thread, in the same way Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj stringed all the scattered sardars in one thread and Tarabai tightened the knot of the garland. If Tarabai was not after 1700 AD, the Maratha kingdom would have declined before 1707 AD itself, but due to her strong leadership the kingdom lasted till 1818 AD.

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Chapter III

The Historical Background of the Peshwas

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The Historical Background of the Peshwas

The administration is an important factor in the development of any empire. There is rise of an empire from a small kingdom through the best administration. There was the rise of Maratha power in the seventeenth century under the leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He transformed the 'Swaraj' into '*Suraaj*' which means a kingdom into a good kingdom with his skilled administrative technique. The Chhatrapati were in the center of the administration of the Marathas. There was the centralization of power, the whole administration was moving around the Chhatrapati. There is a lot of responsibility of administration upon the king and his ministers. The responsibility of law and order, peace, welfare, economy etc. is on the central power and his ministers who are there to assist him. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj proclaimed his ministry. There were eight ministers in the ministry. It was known as 'Ashtpradhan Mandal' or council of eight ministers. Peshwa, Aamatya, Sachiv, Mantri, Sumant, Nyayadhish, Panditrao and Senapati were the members of the council.

Among the eight members of the council 'Peshwa' was the most important member. The Peshwa served as the subordinate to the Chhatrapati. The Peshwa was the minister who served as the Chief executive to the king. Adnyapatrakar writes, "Ministers (Pradhan) are the pillars of the house whose name is kingdom. They are the chief means for the proper protection of the kingdom and also of creating a new one. A minister is one who spreads the king's power. A minister is the head charged with the duty of the protection of the people." ¹

Ramchandrapant Amatya composed the 'Adnyapatra'. It is a royal edict on the principles of Maratha policy written 'Modi' script. He had described the various responsibilities of the Peshwa. It indicates that the Peshwa was an important officer in the administration after Chhatrapati during Shiv Era. The Peshwa had been referred as the pillar of state defense, accomplished in his work. The Peshwa was the head of the king's advisory council 'Asht Pradhan Mandal'. The Peshwa had an important position in the administration after the king.

3.1 Duties of the Peshwa

The Peshwa was known as 'Pradhan Mantri' or 'mukhya Pradhan' in Ashtpradhan. "The word 'Peshwa' comes from the Persian language meaning a leader, foremost." ² Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj renamed this designation as 'Pant Pradhan' after his coronation in 1674 AD, but this term less commonly used. Justice Ranade writes about Peshwa, "The Peshwa was prime minister, next to the king, and was at the head of both the civil and military administration."³ This shows that the Peshwa was the Chief advisor of the Chhatrapati that's why he had the importance as the king after Chhatrapati in the administration. As per the meaning in Persian language Peshwa means leader, first. It means he was the leader of rest of the seven Pradhans. He was the chief of the council of minister.

"Pradhan (Peshwa) is elite, hardworking, followers of state duties, generous, stable, sensible, industrious, non-addict, virtuous, active, selfless, wise as well as has the ability to overcome the enemy with peace, wealth, punishment, divide (*saam, daam, dand, bhed*)."⁴

The Maratha administration like other administration had a rule to put stamp on the letters or correspondence. The name and the office of the Pradhan or sardar, from whom the letters, farmans, orders were given or written, were stamped. All the ministers in Ashtpradhan used to mention the name of Chhatrapati above their name on correspondence or letter, farman etc. The Peshwa also used the stamp or *mudra* where there was his name after the name of the Chhatrapati.

Balaji Vishwanath wrote the letter to Ramji Kadam and Narsoji Jadhav on 8th February 1720 and ordered to recover the money from Taarale and handover to Bajirao. Balaji Vishwanath used his stamp on the letter.

“श्री राजा शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

बाळाजी विश्वनाथ मुख्य प्रधान” ⁵

It is observed that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was referred ‘*Narpati Harshnidhan*’ and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was referred as Mukhya Pradhan. In this way the Chhatrapatis had was referred as ‘*Narapati Harshnidhan*’ or Chhatrapati Harshnidhan and the Peshwas was referred as ‘Mukhya Pradhan’ on stamp or seal. In the letter, which was written by Bajirao I on 30 October 1730, Kartik Shuddh 1 Shake 1659, was referred his office as ‘Pradhan’.

“श्री राजा शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

बाजीराव बल्लाळ प्रधान” ⁶

It is observed that ‘Mukhya Pradhan’ and ‘Pradhan’ words were also used for the Persian word ‘Peshwa’ along with Pradhan Mantri or Pant

Pradhan. Chhatrapatis were the powerful ruler of the state and the Peshwas were the main steward. It was necessary for Peshwa to participate actively and to lead the army in the battle or war. He had to keep control over administration and other ministers in Ashtpradhan. He used to look after the military and civil affairs. Most important thing is that though the Peshwa had some special rights compared to the other Pradhans or ministers, he had to work under the Chhatrapati and as per the will of the Chhatrapati.

Peshwa's main duty and rights were, "The Mukhya Pradhan should do all political and administrative works. He should have equal treatment for all and without any hatred or disrespect for any (of his colleagues) work with the counsel and cooperation of all."⁷ There were many expectations from Peshwa for the smooth administration. The Peshwa should lead army with courage in the battles and get victory over the new kingdoms. He should collect all the important information of the enemy. He should put his own seal on state documents and correspondence. It shows that there was a lot of importance of the Peshwa in the administration among other Pradhans, but after the Chhatrapati.

In Ashtpradhan Mandal only senapati was from Maratha community and other seven were from Brahmin community. In this way the Peshwa was also a Brahmin. There are many sub-castes or branches in Brahmin community. "All the Peshwas during the rule of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram Maharaj belonged to Deshastha Brahmin community."⁸ During the rule of Shivaji II, the Peshwas were Deshastha Brahmin. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed Balaji Vishwanath as Peshwa, he was from Chitpavan Brahmin Community. After the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the council of ministers broke up and the office

lost its primacy, but it was revived when Chhatrapati Shahu appointed Balaji Vishwanath Bhat a Peshwa in 1713 AD.

3.2. Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar

Shivaji Maharaj crowned on 6 June 1674 AD and become Chhatrapati. At the same time, he established the Asht Pradhan Mandal. The main motto behind the foundation of Asht Pradhan Mandal was the decentralization of the power, involvement of the efficient and brave sardars from Swaraj in the administration, and use of the Strength, skills of sardars for the development of Swaraj. Due to this role of Shivaji Maharaj, the dutifulness in the administrative officers of the state increased and their intimacy for the Chhatrapati and kingdom increased on the occasion of coronation the eight Pradhans stood at the eight pillars. Their names are in detail as follow:

“Moro Trimal Pingle Peshwe Mukhya Pradhan

Ramchandra Nilkanth Amatya

Annaji Datto Sachiv

Dattaji Trimal Mantri

Ramchandra Trimbak Sumant

Honaji Anant Nyayadhish

Raghunath Panditrao Daandikshit Divyashastri

Asoji Mohite Hambirrao Senapati”⁹

Moro Trimal Pingle was appointed as the Peshwa or Mukhya Pradhan. The Peshwa and other Pradhans came in the light since coronation, but the office of the Peshwa was in work even before many years of coronation. Most of the time it is considered that Moro Trimal Pingle was the first Peshwa, but before 1674 too Moro Trimal Pingle was Peshwa and before Moro Trimbak there was another person who was serving the Swaraj as the Peshwa. The person who can be called the first Peshwa was Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar. He was the first Peshwa of the Swaraj. “Shivaji’s first Peshwa Shamrao Nilkanth Ranzekar’s mudra (seal) ‘Shiv Narpati Harsh Nidhan, Samraj Manimatpradhan’ was in use on royal documents even before 1654 AD.”¹⁰

There are many evidences which show that the first Peshwa of Maratha administration was Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar. In Sabhasad Bakhar also we find that Shamraj Nikanth has been referred as Peshwa. Shivaji and Jijau were sent along with Dadoji Kondev from Bangluru to Pune (by Shahaji). Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar Peshwa was sent along with them. Shamraj Nilkanth has been mentioned as the Peshwa. “Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar came from Bengaluru with Shivaji in Shake 1560, but he got charter of Peshwaship in Shake 1565.”¹¹

An important thing is that as per the Sabhasad, Shamraj Nilkanth got the charter of Peshwaship after five years of his arrival in Poona. It means Shivaji Maharaj recognized him as the Peshwa in 1643 AD. “The reason for this may be that Shivaji felt the need to appoint an official over the authority of the Peshwa when he was in charge of the provinces of Pune and Supe or only in the province of Pune.”¹²

In the book 'Itihas Sangrah' edited by D. B. Parasnis a letter has been published. Visaji Prabhu, Son Prabhu and Ekoji Prabhu wrote letter to Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar about kulkarna. They wrote in that "In the service of Swami Rajshri Shamraj Pandit Peshwe."¹³ The letter had been written before 1656 AD. It indicates that Shamraj Nilknath Ranzekar had been the Peshwa since before 1656 AD.

One more letter shows that Shamraj Nilkanth was the Peshwa before Moropant Pingle. Shamraj Mahadev Ranzkar, grandson of Shamraj Nilkanth Ranzekar, received a letter written by Janoji Deshkulkarni about the 'Vrutti' of seven villages. He mentioned the name of Shamraj Nilkanth as the Peshwa." Earlier, your grandfather Rajashri Shamraj Nilknath was in the service of Chhatrapati as the Peshwa."¹⁴ "Shamraj's seals are found on the document up to Shake 1584 (1662 AD)"¹⁵

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was giving importance to feat and accomplishment. If anyone failed to prove his prowess, he immediately removed the sardar from the office. Same case happened with Shamraj Nilknath. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was not happy with the work of Shamraj Nilkanth. He didn't get success in the campaigns. Chitnis wrote, "Shamraj proved to be quite inefficient in handling the political affairs of Janjira and was defeated in that expedition."¹⁶ Shamraj didn't get success in the expedition of Janjira, so Shivaji Maharaj was disappointed with Shamraj's performance. He sent Moropant Pingle instead of Shamraj on Janjira expedition. Moropant proved his bravery in the expedition. As Moropant Pingle carried out the expedition successfully, Shivaji Raja removed Shamraj from the office of Peshwa and appointed Moropant as the

new Peshwa. “Moro Trimbak Pingle was rewarded with the Peshwaship; the office which was formerly held by Samrao Nilkanth Ranzekar”¹⁷

It shows that in Shiv Era administration, the only criterion for the selection of administrative officers was efficiency. It can be observed that the Chhatrapati in Shiv Era had rejected the hereditary appointments in various offices. Only efficiency was the main criteria. That is why Shivaji Maharaj removed Shamraj Nilkanth from the office of Peshwa and appointed Moropant on the same post as he was efficient, brave and more active than previous Peshwa.

3.3. Moropant Trimbak Pingle

Moropant Trimbak Pingle was also known as Moropant Peshwe. Many a times he is also known as the first Peshwa in Shiv era, because at the time of coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he was appointed as the Peshwa in Ashtpradhan Mandal. He was one of the loyal, efficient, brave intelligent sardars of Swaraj. He had also contributed in the development of Maratha kingdom in the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

“Moropant Peshwa was born in Deshastha Brahmin family in 1620 Nimgaon.”¹⁸ Trimal Pingle, father of Moropant Pingle, was in the service of Shahaji Raje Bhosle in Karnataka. At that time Moropant was with his father. “Moropant returned home when still a youth and joined Shivaji’s army in 1653.”¹⁹ In a short period of time with his efficiency he created his own distinct identity in the Maratha army. He participated with Shivaji

Maharaj in most of the battles. He carried out every task entrusted to him by the king. In the battle of Pratapgad Shivaji Maharaj killed Afzal Khan and Maratha army attacked over Bijapur army. Moropant Pingle had led a troop of Maratha army and defeated the enemy. Shivaji Maharaj was pleased with Moropant's performance and gave him the charge of Purandar fort. The responsibility of constructive of Pratapgad for was also given to Moropant. He built the fort of Pratapgad with skillful leadership. "Afterwards Moropant became the right hand of Shivaji Maharaj."²⁰

Shamraj Ranzekar was the Peshwa before Moropant Pingle. He didn't get the success to defeat Sawants and Siddis of Konkan, so Shivaji Maharaj sent Moropant Pingle. He successfully defeated them. Shivaji Maharaj took a note of Moropant's duties and appointed him as the Peshwa. "The Brahman Moro Trimbak Pingle had labored hard in this connection and the Peshwaship was on that account taken from Samrav Nilkanth and conferred on Moropant."²¹ This proves once again that Shamrao was the Peshwa before Moropant, but due to his failure in expedition, efficient Moropant was given Peshwaship.

Moropant showed and proved his accomplishment in various battles. He contributed in the development of the Swaraj with his skilled leadership in 1672 Marathas defeated the army of Vikramshaha, the king of Koli as well as Javhara. "Pingle led the Maratha campaign against Koli king of North Konkan."²² Afterwards the Maratha army marched towards Ramnagar in North kingdom under the leadership of Pingle. Koli king of Ramnagar flee due to the sudden attack of the Marathas, but Pingle had to return to the Swaraj due to the onset of rainy season and military arrangement of Mughal

Commander-in-Chief Dilerkhan. In July 1672 Moropant Pingle took the troop and conquered the territory of Ram Nagar.

3.3.1 Responsibilities Upon Moropant

Moropant Pingle was an accomplished personality in politics. It can be seen through various expeditions led and won by him. He had got victory in many battles. He was perfect not only in politics, but in revenue and agricultural affairs also. It can be seen through different important agricultural tasks given to him by Shivaji Maharaj. There was chaos in Swaraj after the treaty of Purandar as Shivaji Maharaj surrendered twenty-three forts to Aurangzeb. He began to rearrange the scattered Swaraj after returning from Agra. He distributed important responsibilities among capable and efficient sardars. “Moropant Pingle and Annaji Datto were asked to focus on agricultural reforms and resettlements.”²³

Earlier, before his visit to Agra, Shivaji Maharaj had entrusted an important task to Moropant Pingle. Shivaji Maharaj was not compelled to be present in the court of Aurangzeb in Agra like other vassals of Mughals. At the time of battle of Bijapur, Mirza Raje Jaisingh wrote a letter to Aurangzeb and suggested, “May be Shivaji is also likely to go to Bijapur. I think he should go to your visit to avoid it.”²⁴ Jaisingh convinced Shivaji Maharaj for the Agra visit. Finally, Maharaj was convinced to go to Agra to visit Aurangzeb in his court.

Before leaving for Agra, Shivaji Maharaj handed over the responsibility of Swaraj to the responsible sardars. The Swaraj should be looked after carefully in his absence so he did proper arrangement of the administration. “His mother Jija Bai was left as Regent, with direct control

over the Desh (country).”²⁵ It was necessary to appoint the sardars to assist Jijabai in administration. He appointed three important officials. “Moropant Peshwa, Niloji Sondev, the Mujumdar and Annaji Datto, the keeper of the seal were placed in independent charge of the Konkan province.”²⁶

It shows that in the absence of the King the Peshwa was responsible to look after the administration. According to Shivaji Maharaj, Moropant Pingle was capable, along with the other two, to run the administration in his absence. One important thing was that though Moropant Pingle and other two had been asked to look after the administration, they were not allowed to take decisions on their own. Moropant Peshwe, Nilo Sondev Mujumdar and Prataprao Gujar were asked to run the administration, but they were ordered, “These three should follow Jijabai’s orders keeping a watch on everything.”²⁷ The Peshwa was secondary to the Chhatrapati. Though he was responsible to run the administration in the absence of Chhatrapati, there was control of Chhatrapati upon the Peshwa even in his absence in Shiv Era. At the time of Agra visit there was control of Jijabai upon Peshwa on the behalf of the Chhatrapati. It shows a different kind of diplomacy of Shivaji Maharaj. He assigned various responsibilities to the Peshwa and was involved in many decisions, but he never allowed the Peshwa to dominate him.

The above discussion proves that the office of Peshwa was there before the coronation too, but the word and office of Peshwa got the official significance after the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. “Shivaji Maharaj was crowned on 6 June 1674”²⁸ He became Chhatrapati. As per the tradition in monarchy, he also proclaimed his council of ministers and appointed capable Sardars in the office. It was known as Asht Pradhan

Mandal. Among all eight offices Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj appointed Moropant Pingle as the Peshwa or Mukhya Pradhan. Or we can also say that Moropant Pingle was continued as the Peshwa as he was already in the office. “Moropant Pingle was honored to sit on the right side of the throne as Peshwa.”²⁹ Justice Ranade says, “The Peshwa was prime minister, next to the king.”³⁰ Moropant Pingle deserved the office due to his loyalty and devotion towards the Swaraj. “(Peshwa) sat first to the right hand below the throne.”³¹

In this way Moropant Pingle’s contribution in the development and expansion of Swaraj was very important. His role in the administration of Marathas was unforgettable in the history of the Marathas. His dedication towards Chhatrapati and his administration was found in the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, but after the death of first Chhatrapati his previous faith in the Swaraj and in the Chhatrapati waned off.

3.3.2. Involvement in the Conspiracy Against Prince Sambhaji

During illness of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Moropant Pingle’s role as the Peshwa was very important in the overall interest of the Maratha kingdom, because he was next to the Chhatrapati. In such a critical condition of the Swaraj, due to the inducement offered by Soyarabai, Peshwa Moropant Pingle betrayed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj’s policies by ignoring his chosen successor. That was the tragedy in the Maratha administration. The incident of treason by Shivaji’s loyal Peshwa was a major cause of Civil war in the Maratha kingdom which took place between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj’s wife Soyarabai and son Sambhaji. This changing role of Pingle created internal disputes in the Swaraj. The changing

role of the Peshwa shows that how the state disintegrates when a dutiful person ignores the national interest and values selfishness. Pingle should have contributed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's ideal principal of Swaraj and it was necessary to act accordingly while committing such a serious treason. The Peshwa took the side of untruth for his selfishness. In a way, this was a humiliation to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's principles and leadership. In short, he gave more importance to self-development rather than the development of Swaraj. For the first time, the Peshwa himself appears to have devalued his position.

3.4. Nilkanth Moreshwar Pingle

Nilkanth Moreshwar Pingle was the second Peshwa in Shiv Era after the coronation. He was appointed in the office of the Peshwa after Moropant Pingle. He was also known as Nilo Moreshwar in the history of Marathas. "Nilo Moreshwar was son of Moropant Pingle."³² Nilo Moreshwar was conferred Peshwaship is referred in Shakavali also. "Nilo Moreshwar, son of Moropant, was made the Peshwa by Sambhaji."³³

Moropant Pingle was appointed as one of the members of Asht Pradhan Mandal and he was the Peshwa. The post of the Peshwa was not hereditary. It was conferred to a competent and efficient person. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had appointed Pingle as the Peshwa. "Although the post of Peshwa was not hereditary, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj showed his greatness by appointing Nilopant as Peshwa after Moropant."³⁴ Though Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj appointed Niloji as the Peshwa, he had been appointed on the basis his capability. Nilopant Pingle was also efficient as

his father Moropant. He showed his bravery and accomplishments within a short period. “His father was involved in the conspiracy against Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. He conspired to imprison Sambhaji.”³⁵ Despite these things, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj believed in Nilopant. Nilopant gave his best and proved himself as a capable Peshwa. He completed all the tasks successfully given by Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. “Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had trust in Nilopant, so he was sent to Karnataka to assist Haraji Mahadik to look after the territory in 1681 AD.”³⁶

An incident reveals the Sambhai Maharaj’s trust in Nilopant. According to above reference Harjiraji Mahadik was given the responsibility of the Southern territories. An important thing is that he had been ordered to look after the administration of Jinjee. He began to dominate the territory of Jinjee. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was suspicious about his work. Nilopant was with him. Chhatrapati Sambhaji sent to Keso Trimal Pingle to Jinjee. There was hostility between Nilopant and Keso. Keso took the advantage of the situation and did complain against Peshwa to Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati was confident about the Peshwa so he neglected the complaints. It was the success of the Peshwa. He was far away from the Chhatrapati by distance, but close to the Chhatrapati by trust. The Chhatrapati knew the devotion of Nilopant towards the Swaraj, so he didn’t give importance to the complaints of Kesopant. The success of any kingdom or empire depends upon the trust between the king and his ministers. Such a type of trust was found between Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and Peshwa Nilopant Pingle.

Some references give information that Gangadhar Moreshwar, brother of Nilo Moreshwar, was appointed as the Peshwa in the absence of Nilo Moreshwar. It is found that when Nilo Moreshwar was sent to Jinjee, his

brother Gangadharrao was appointed as the Peshwa. “In the documents dated 23.3.1685 the seal of Gangadhar is as the Peshwa.”³⁷ It shows that Gangadhar served the Swaraj as a Peshwa for some time, but he was an interim Peshwa.

Nilopant Peshwa carried out the task in Southern India successfully. Chhatrapati was happy with the devotion of Nilopant, so he placed the responsibility of expedition against the Portuguese. “The army of the Marathas under the leadership of the Peshwa laid a siege to Portuguese at Chaul.”³⁸ But the Marathas didn’t get success there. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was aware of the power of the Portuguese. Still he ordered to Nilopant to lead the expedition. The Chhatrapati was aware of the power of the Portuguese as well as ability of his Peshwa. Nilopant was also aware of the power of enemy, but for him the order of his master was more powerful, so he accepted the responsibility. Unfortunately, he didn’t get success, but he proved his adherence by accepting the responsibility.

Nilopant showed his loyalty from time to time to Chhatrapati. During the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji, the treachery of the Sardars created a chaos in the Swaraj. At that time, Aurangzeb was in Deccan. It was his strong desire to conquer the Maratha kingdom. He knew that if the Maratha sardars join him, he could conquer the kingdom easily. He was using all the means to make them join the Mughal army. One of the Maratha sardars was Kanhoji, cousin of Yesubai. He joined the Mughal army and got the mansab of five thousand. Like him, many sardars went to Aurnagzeb. “But in such a situation also, Nilo Moreshwar, Pralhad Niraji, Harji Raje Mahadik, Rupaji Bhosale etc. such people risked their lives for the Swaraj.”³⁹

The Peshwas worked hard with devotion for the Swaraj since the very beginning. How would Nilopant stay behind in it? Not attracted to any of Aurangzeb's temptations, Nilopant gave his best for the development of the Swaraj during the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Chhatrapati Sambhaji's assassination caused a lot of chaos in the state. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was proclaimed as a successor of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj believed in Nilopant and appointed him the Peshwa. The same belief Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj had in Nilopant. The political developments took place very fast after the death of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Yesubai, wife of Chhatrapati Sambhaji, decided to send Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj to the stronghold of Jinjee. The new king and some sardars left Raigad and started their journey. On the way, they were taking shelter in the forts of the Swaraj. "On September 26, 1689, disguised, Rajaram Maharaj and his companions left Panhala fort around midnight."⁴⁰ He took many trustworthy sardars along with him. The book 'Rajaramcharitam' composed by Keshav Pandit gives a list of those who went along with Rajaram Maharaj to Jinjee. "Nilo Moreshwar was one of them."⁴¹ Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj reached at Jinjee in April 1690 and thereafter he proclaimed his Ashtpradhan Mandal. "Nilopant Pingle was appointed as the Peshwa."⁴²

Like Moreshwar Pingle, we find the seal of Nilo Moreshwar on various documents during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj. In the letter dated 14 February 1693, it is mentioned that Chhatrapati Rajaram sanctioned a village to Rakhmaji Mohite at the request of Santaji Ghorpade.

In the latter he had mentioned Chhatrapati's name as first and then his name as a Mukhya Pradhan.

“श्री राजाराम नरपति हर्षनिधान

मोresh्वर सुत नीळकंठ प्रधान”⁴³

“Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj died on 2 March 1700.”⁴⁴ After the death of Chhatrapati Rajaram his wife Tarabai installed her son Shivaji II on the throne and began to rule as a regent of minor Chhatrapati. Nilopant Moreshwar was the Peshwa during the reign of Shivaji II. Nilopant Moreshwar was the first Peshwa who served the three Chhatrapatis. He was the witness of the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. He got the honor to serve three Chhatrapatis in the history of the Marathas. As the seal during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj, his seals are found the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. According to a letter dated 1 November 1702 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II gave Govare village as an *Inam* to Girjoji Yadav. There was the seal of Nilo Moreshwar on the letter.

“श्री शिवनरनति हर्षनिधान

मोresh्वर सुत नीळकंठ प्रधान”⁴⁵

Prince Shahu, son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, returned in the Swaraj in 1707 AD. It caused the civil war between him and Maharani Tarabai. Nilopant played an important role as a Peshwa. He supported and helped Maharani Tarabai. He opposed Prince Shahu and offered his loyalty towards Maharani Tarabai and Chhatrapati Shivaji II. Many of powerful

sardars left the side of Maharani Tarabai and joined Prince Shahu. Parsoji Bhosale and his brother Sabaji had also joined Shahu. Nilopant was never attracted to any decoy to join the side of Shahu. Maharani Tarabai tried her best to make her sardars not to go Prince Shahu. “She asked her sardars to put their hand on *dudh-bhhat* (milk and rice) and to take oath to be loyal towards her.”⁴⁶ Many were pretending as if they were taking oath, but they were with Shahu internally. Nilopant’s never forgot his oath and he remained with Maharani Tarabai. Civil war broke out in the Swaraj and the Maratha kingdom was divided into two thrones. Chhatrapati Shivaji II ruled from the Kolhapur throne and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj

ruled from the Satara throne. “Nilopant Peshwa remained with the throne of Kolhapur i.e. Tarabai.”⁴⁷

3.5. Bahiro Moreshwar Pingle

Prince Shahu won Satara in 1707 AD. He made it his new capital. “After that he was crowned on 12 January 1707 and became the Chhatrapati.”⁴⁸ All the killedars, sardars, vatandars etc. offered their allegiance at Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj’s feet. As per the tradition, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also declared his Ashtpradhan Mandal. He appointed Bahiropant Moreshwar Pingle⁴⁹ as the Peshwa. He was known as the Bahiro Peshwa. “Bahiropant Moreshwar was the brother of former Peshwa Nilopant.”⁵⁰ That is, he was the son of Moropant Pingle. He was the third member of the Pingle family in the office of Peshwa. Here, the important thing is that the Peshwaship was not hereditary, but unknowingly the office had become the hereditary. Bahiropant had been mentioned as Bhairav in some documents.

The seals of Bahiropant are found on various documents as the Peshwa. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gave the village Khedsa as an *inam* to Kanhoji Bhosale *bin* (Father) Parsoji Bhosale. There is the seal of Bahiropant on the letter.

“श्री शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

मोresh्वर सुत भैरव प्रधान”⁵¹

Bahiro Moreshwar was in the office of the Peshwa from 1708 to 1713 AD. He served the Swaraj for six to seven years, but he could not play a significant role like his father and brother. He was not having a good leadership. Chandrasen Jadhav openly revolted against Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He openly joined Maharani Tarabai. Due to the threat of Chandrasen, many sardars of Satara were in dilemma. In this critical situation, Bahiropant's role as a Peshwa was very important in this situation. The Peshwa should have taken the initiative to suppress the revolt of Chandrasen. “He did not make special moves as a Peshwa.”⁵²

Peshwa Bahiropant did not give his anything best during his whole career. His incompetence can be seen in one more incident. Kanhoji Angre was the chief of the Maratha armor. His anti-Shahu policy was the threat to the Shahu's reign. He had conquered some territories which were under the control of Chhatrapati Shahu. It also included the territory of the Peshwa's Jahagir. Chhatrapati Shahu sent Bahiropant Peshwa against Kanhoji Angre. G. S. Sardesai says, “Bahiropant had no strategy of war or politics.”⁵³

Kanhoji Angre was a very powerful and clever sardar. Bahiropant proved his inefficiency in front of Kanhoji. “Kanhoji imprisoned Bahiropant

and Nilo Ballal Chitnis in the fort of Kulaba.”⁵⁴ It was a critical crisis before Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. It had happened for the first time in the Swaraj that the Peshwa was imprisoned by the enemy. It was a big blow for Shahu Maharaj. Chhatrapati Shahu sent Balaji Vishwanath to release the Peshwa and he removed the Peshwa from the office.

3.6. Balaji Vishwanath Bhat

Balaji Vishwanath Bhat was the first Peshwa in the Peshwa Era or Peshwaai. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj expelled Bahiropan Pingle from the office of the Peshwa and appointed Balaji Vishwanath Bhat. This incident gave birth to the new era in the history of Marathas. It was beginning of a series of powerful, talented and efficient Peshwas. One more important change took place and that was the office of Peshwa became hereditary officially. The office of Peshwa became most important than the other offices in the Ashtpradhan. It became important to such an extent that in the passage of time other offices either became weak or were removed. The office of Peshwa became important only because of Balaji Vishwanath Bhat.

Balaji Vishwanath Bhat was generally known without his surname in the history. “Balaji Vishwanath’s birth place was Shrivardhan.”⁵⁵ The village is in Konkan. The exact information about the early life of Balaji Vishwanth is not available. He inherited the office of Deshmukh. He worked as a clerk on the salt plants of Siddis for some period. He left the Konkan and came to Desh (rest of Maharashtra) as the atrocities were increased by the Siddis. He started to serve in the Swaraj. He was clerk under Ramchandrapant Amatya in 1689 AD. “Ramchandrapant Amatya gave him rights to look after the office of Sabanis as Mutalik at Pratapgad.”⁵⁶ He

proved his efficiency, so later on he got *Deshmukhi* of Danda-Rajapuri in 1792 AD and *Sabhasad* in Dabhol region. He worked on different posts and offices during the period of war of independence and proved his ability. “Balaji Vishwanath was appointed as Sarsubhedar of the regions of Pune, Nagar and Daulatabad.”⁵⁷

3.6.1 In the Contact of Prince Shahu

He came in the contact of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj when he was in the confinement in the Mughal camps. Many bulls and bullock carts had been provided for food supplies during 1703 to 1704. He used to go along with the food supplies. He became familiar with the Mughal sardars. Taking advantage of this acquaintance, he formed his acquaintance with Shahu and Yesubai. He was convinced that the real successor of the Swaraj was the son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Prince Shahu. He resolved to help Prince Shahu. “He met imprisoned Shahu in 1702 AD.”⁵⁸

He played an important role to ensure the Maratha sardars that the real successor of the Swaraj was Shahu. The most significant achievement of Balaji Vishwanath was that he persuaded powerful Dhanaji Jadhav to support Prince Shahu. Dhanaji Jadhav remained neutral without helping Maharani Tarabai. This reveals the best politicians in Balaji Vishwanath. It was not an easy task to persuade the Maratha chiefs to leave the Tarabai's side, but Balaji Vishwanath succeeded to complete the task with great perseverance and cunningness. “That is why the Maratha chiefs accepted Shahu as their king.”⁵⁹

Richard Temple, the once the governor of Bombay, writes about Balaji Vishwanath, “He had a calm, comprehensive and commanding

intellect an imaginative and aspiring disposition and an aptitude for ruling rude natures by moral force, a genius for diplomatic combinations, a mastery of finance.”⁶⁰ Sir Richard Temple has explained Balaji Vishwanath very nicely in the minimum words. Balaji Vishwanath got an opportunity to prove his efficiency during the critical condition of Maratha kingdom. He took the advantage of the opportunity and earned the trust of Prince Shahu.

3.6.2. Contribution in the Journey from Prince Shahu to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj

After the death of Aurangzeb, Prince Shahu returned to the Swaraj. The civil war broke out between Shahu and Maharani Tarabai. Initially it was very difficult to get victory over Tarabai as Shahu was new in the Swaraj, many powerful sardars were with Tarabai. Balaji Vishwanath played a very important, significant and crucial role in Shahu’s victory. Dhanaji Jadhav was one of the powerful sardars. If Dhanaji had fought on Tarabai’s side, it would have been difficult for Shahu to win. Balaji Vishwanath knew the condition very well, so he successfully convinced Dhanaji to help Prince Shahu. He got victory in the battle of Khed due to the efforts of Balaji Vishwanath, Shahu was very happy with Balaji Vishwanath. Shahu conquered Satara. He was crowned on 12 January 1708.”⁶¹

After the coronation, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had a huge task of building Swaraj. “Dhanaji Jadhav died on 27 June 1708.”⁶² There was discord between Balaji Vishwanath and Chandrasen Jadhav, son of Dhanaji Jadhav. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj knew the nature of Balaji Vishwanath, so he supported him as he had doubt about Chandrasen. Chandrasen Jadhav rebelled and joined Maharani Tarabai. Balaji Vishwanath proved his

efficiency by handling the situation of Swaraj. “As a safeguard against possible treachery by the new Senapati, Shahu appointed Balaji Vishwanath to the post of Senakarte (organizer of forces).”⁶³

Balaji Vishwanath had an excellent quality of organizational skills and ingenuity to persuade the chiefs. These skills were very significant for Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He was aware of the skills of Balaji Vishwanath, so he introduced a new office only for Balaji Vishwanath. The new office was ‘Senakarte’. Earlier, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had introduced the office of Chhandogamatya for Kavi Kalash and Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj had introduced the office of Pantpratinidhi for Pralhad Niraji Raoji. In the same way Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj created a new office of Senakarte means the organizer of the army. “Shrimant Late Maharaj Chhatrapati Shahuraje conferred the title of Senakarte in Shake 1632.”⁶⁴ As per Marathi Daftar the Senakarte title was conferred in Shake 1632. This means that it was conferred in 1710 AD.

The Senakarte title increased the confidence of Balaji Vishwanath. Whenever he got any opportunity, he proved his efficiency. In short, the successes of Balaji Vishwanath indicated the dawn of Peshwaai, a new era in the history of Marathas.

Within a short period, Balaji had become very close and trustworthy of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He had been given very important responsibilities. He crushed the revolt of rebel Krushnarao Khatavkar. He was very old sardars in the Swaraj, but he joined the Mughals. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj sent Balaji Vishwanath with a troop of army to crush the revolt of Krishnarao Khataokar. Balaji defeated Krishnarao successfully.

One of the letters of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gives information about the expedition. “While the army was stationed at Fort Mahiman, Khatavkar did not join and behaved as per the Badshaha, so army was sent (on 2 December 1711) to Khatav village.”⁶⁵

3.6.3. Appointment as the Peshwa

Balaji Vishwanath was galloping in the success. An incident became a turning point in the life of Balaji Vishwanath as well as in the history Maratha. The incident was the clashes between Kanhoji Angre and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. It would not be wrong to say that the incident was the immediate cause of the rise of Peshwa era in the history of Marathas.

Kanhoji Angre was the chief of Maratha armor. “His surname ‘Angre’ was derived from Angarwadi; the family’s original surname was Sankpal.”⁶⁶ He was the supporter of Maharani Tarabai. “Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj had appointed Kanhoji Angre as Commander-in-chief of the Maratha armor.”⁶⁷ “He had promoted and conferred the tile of Sarkhel on him.”⁶⁸ So this naturally led to Kanhoji’s inclination to Tarabai and it increased due to the rebellion of Chandrasen Jadhav. Kanhoji Angre declared war against Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj openly. He was a very efficient Senapati and powerful too. He was trying to expand his territory by attacking the territories of Chhatrapati Shahu which was nearby his Jahagiri. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj sent Peshwa Bahiropant Pingle to defeat Kanhoji Angre. The battle took place between Bahiropant and Kanhoji. Kanhoji Angre got victory and Bahiropant had to bear the brunt of the defeat. “As luck would have it, Bahiropant suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Kanhoji and

was taken as prisoner.”⁶⁹ It was a big shock to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. It was not an ordinary incident because the Peshwa, who was next to Chhatrapati, was defeated and not only that, he was imprisoned. In fact it was the huge defeat for the Chhatrapati.

The incident caused a new chapter in the history of Marathas. The victory of Kanhoji and defeat of Bahiro pant gave birth to the new era in the History of Marathas. The office of Peshwa was vacant as Bahiro pant was in the arrest of Kanhoji Angre. There was a need of a powerful sardar to defeat Kanhoji and release Bahiro pant. In this critical situation Abajipant Purandare, Khando Ballal etc. suggested the name of Balaji Vishwanath for the Peshwaship. Parshuram Pratinidhi also gave the suggestion, “He has experience of military. He should be given the robes of Peshwaship.”⁷⁰

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also had the same views about Balaji Vishwanath. He knew his power and efficiency. He didn’t waste time to think over it more. He discussed with Balaji Vishwanath and ordered to put down Kanhoji Angre by releasing Bahiro pant and Nilo Ballal. He ensured him that when he will return from the mission, he would be appointed as the Peshwa. In this situation once again Balaji Vishwanath proved his wisdom, ingenuity and political strategy. He suggested the Chhatrapati that it would be better to appoint him as a Peshwa before the mission itself. He gave the reason behind the appointment, “Is it not necessary to impress upon Kanhoji that another Peshwa has already taken the place of the one that is gone and that the King’s government goes on without interruption? This is the only way to put him down.”⁷¹

The Chhatrapati agreed with the views of Balaji. The pride that Kanhoji had in keeping the Peshwa in captivity was about to disappear. It shows the diplomacy of Balaji Vishwanath. Really, it was not an easy idea to drive out the enemy with such a strategy. This idea had come from the brain of the person who was influential and diplomatic and that person was Balaji Vishwanath Bhat.

“Shrimant Kailaswasi Chhatrapati Shahu Raje dismissed Bahiropant Pingle from the office of Pradhan and appointed Kailaswasi Balaji Vishwanath in Shake 1636 in the month of Maagha.”⁷² “Balajipant got the robes of Peshwa on 16 November 1713 at Manjari, 8 miles away in the south from Pune.”⁷³ In this way Balaji Vishwanath Bhat became Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath. The appointment of Balaji Vishwanath was the end of Shiv Era and the beginning of the Peshwa Era. He became the first Peshwa in the Peshwa era. It was a beginning of formation of the Maratha kingdom into a huge empire. It was beginning of the creation of new identity of Marathas not only in Deccan, but throughout India. It was beginning of the new series of powerful, diplomatic, efficient and accomplished Peshwas.

It was the unwritten rule in the Ashtpradhan that the Peshwa should be from Brahmin community. There were the Brahmans in the Ashtpradhan Mandal, but no one was Chitpavan Brahamns. “During the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, a diplomatic Chitpavan was included in the Ashtpradhan Mandal for the first time.”⁷⁴ Balaji Vishwanath was Chitpavan Brahmin. “The term ‘Chitpavan’ either means ‘pure of mind’ or ‘pure from the pyre’.”⁷⁵

Balaji Vishwanath had been promoted from the office of Senakarte to the Peshwa. There was a big challenge for Balaji Vishwanath to free Bahiropant from the captivity of Kanhoji Angre. Balaji and Kanhoji belonged to the same region i.e. Konkan, so they were already familiar with each other. So, Balaji decided to use the words in place of weapons. He started the negotiations with Kanhoji through his messengers. Kanhoji became helpless in front of the clever and sensible words of Balaji. Balaji Vishwanath made him understand, “We are like brothers. The Peshwaship is in your house.”⁷⁶

Kanhoji was totally helpless in front of those words. He agreed for a treaty. The treaty was signed between Kanhoji and Balaji Vishwanath. Kanhoji agreed to look after the armor under the overlordship of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and released Bahiropant Pingle. It was an important victory of Balaji Vishwanath. Bahiropant could not defeat Kanhoji despite the army and the weapons, and was found in his captivity. Balaji Vishwanath got victory very easily without using a single weapon and without shedding a single drop of blood. It was a bloodless victory and first victory of Balaji Vishwanath as a Peshwa. All the credit goes to Balaji Vishwanath.

There are stamps of Balaji Vishwanath on various letters and royal documents as a Peshwa. As per the tradition in the Maratha administration the office of Balaji Vishwanath had been mentioned as Mukhya Pradhan.

“श्री राजा शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

बाळाजी विश्वनाथ मुख्य प्रधान”⁷⁷

Balaji Vishwanath successfully looked after the office of Peshwa from 1713 AD till his death in 1720 AD. Around seven years, he served the Maratha kingdom with devotion.

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Chapter IV

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration (1713 AD to 1777 AD)

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The period the reign of the Marathas is from 1630 AD to 1818 AD. It means from the birth of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj till the end of the Maratha Empire. The reign has been divided into two periods, Shiv Era and the Peshwa Era or Peshwaai. The reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and regency of Maharani Tarabai comes under the period of Shiv Era. The period is from 1630 AD to 1707 AD. The period from 1707 AD to 1818 AD is considered to be the Peshwaai. But in fact, the Peshwaai began in 1713 AD., when Balaji Vishwanath got the robes of Peshwaship and it was the beginning of the new era that is the Peshwaai. So, the duration of Peshwaai is from 1713 AD to 1818 AD.

The two Chhatrapatis ruled over the Maratha Empire from 1713 to 1777. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ruled from 1713 AD to 1749 AD and Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj ruled form 1749 AD to 1777 AD in the Peshwa Era.

4.1

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and the Administration (1708 AD to 1749 AD)

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. “Shahu Maharaj was born on 18 May 1682 to Yesubai.”¹ At that time the Mughal Emperor

Aurangzeb was in the Deccan. It was his strong desire to include the Maratha kingdom in the Mughal Empire. He assassinated Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj in 1689 AD with an intention to destroy the Maratha kingdom. “Zulfikarkhan besieged the Raigad, capital of the Maratha kingdom.”² At that time prince Shahu was mere seven years old. In such a critical situation Maharani Yesubai made great sacrifice to face that crisis with determination in times of emergency “and declared Rajaram Maharaj as the king of the kingdom.”³ Maharani Yesubai’s role at that time was to keep the interest of the state first. She declared Rajaram as the new king with a large heart without giving importance to the blood relations.

4.1.2 Prince Shahu in the Captivity of the Mughals

The siege of the Mughals was getting stronger. It was decided to send the new king to the stronghold of Jinji as there was a threat to his life from the Mughals. Maharani Yesubai and Prince Shahu stayed in the Raigad itself. The siege was for ten months. The situation was out of control. It was not possible to defend the fort for a long time. “Zulfikarkhan, who was besieged, took advantage of Yesubai’s helplessness and took the initiative to negotiate for the treaty.”⁴

Maharani Yesubai also showed her readiness for the negotiations as she did not have any option. She wanted to know about her and Prince Shahu’s protection, in case they were found captive by the Mughals. Zeenat-un-Nissa, daughter of Aurangzeb, promised to protect Maharani Yesubai, Prince Shahu and other captives. She assured, “The family of Sambhaji Raje has not a beat of threat. She spoke to the Emperor that he (Shahu) is my son. He should be brought with promise of security.”⁵

Maharani Yesubai became ready for the negotiations due to the assurance by Mughal princess. Yesubai and Prince Shahu were brought in the Mughal camp as captives. Zinat-un-Nissa gave a good treatment to the captives. “Prince Shahu’s name was Shivaji at the time of birth.”⁶ “But Aurangzeb used to call him as Shahu during his captivity.”⁷ Afterwards he was called Shahu. “The various seals found from the contemporary period mentioned his name as Shivaji and later he was called as Shahu.”⁸

There was a good arrangement for Maharani Yesubai, Prince Shahu and other captives in the Mughal camp. The officers were appointed for the education of Prince Shahu. Everything was provided to Shahu as a prince. “Aurangzeb conferred the title of Raja on Shahu with the seven thousand mansabdari.”⁹ Overall, Prince Shahu spent his childhood and youth in majesty. It impacted his political career. He could not get the experience of battles, battlefield as he spent his early life in luxury. That’s why his political life was depended on Peshwas during his reign as a Chhatrapati in future.

4.1.2. Release from the Captivity

Shahu Maharaj spent his eighteen years from 1689 to 1707 in the Mughal captivity. “Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb died in Deccan on 20 February 1707.”¹⁰ The war of succession began among the children of Aurangzeb. Shahu Maharaj and Maharani Yesubai were in the Mughal camp at Ahamadnagar at the time of death of Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb’s son Muhammad Azam performed all the rites and declared himself as the Mughal Emperor. He wanted to reach Delhi as early as possible. Shahu Maharaj and Yesubai were with him. Zulfikarkhan convinced Muhammad

Azam to release Prince Shahu and explained its importance. When Shahu would be released, there will be civil war between him and Maharani Tarabai. They would be busy in the war and there would not be any threat to the Mughals. Azam Shah agreed with Zulfikarkhan. He laid down three conditions before Shahu's release.

1. "That he was to rule the small Swarajya of his grandfather as a vassal of the Mughal Empire.
2. That he was to serve his liege lord whenever called upon to do so with his contingent of troops.
3. That he was also permitted to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal provinces of the South."¹¹

These conditions were to some extent controlling freedom. Shahu's freedom was going to get destroyed due to these conditions. But at that time, it was very important to be released from the captivity of the Mughals. So, he accepted the conditions. Shahu Maharaj was released on 8 May 1707 at Daroha on the banks of River Narmada, but his mother Yesubai and Madansing were not released.

4.1.3. Arrival in the Swaraj and Coronation

Shahu Maharaj crossed Narmada River and entered in Khandesh. Mohan Rawal, Maratha Sardar of Bijagar, supported Shahu Maharaj. From there, he wrote letters to many sardars and convinced them to support him as he was the real successor of the Maratha Swaraj. Many of them responded positively to these letters and joined Shahu Maharaj. It included powerful and efficient sardars like Parsoji Bhosale, Haibatrao Nimbalkar, Nemaji Shinde, Rustumrao Jadhav.

He arrived at Ahamadnagar and declared himself as the real successor of the Swaraj. Maharani Tarabai was managing the affairs of the Swaraj as a regent of her minor son Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. Shahu Maharaj wrote a letter to Maharani Tarabai, his aunt and informed, “I am returning to the own country (Swadesh). Now I will exercise the power. It is the order of Badshah. You are mother. You will be taken care properly.”¹²

Maharani Tarabai was more ambitious and powerful. She had been protecting the Swaraj for seven-eight years courageously. When she got the letter from Prince Shahu, she wrote to him, “You have no claim on the kingdom. I will not give you the kingdom.”¹³

Many negotiations took place between Tarabai and Shahu through many ways for the succession of the kingdom, but Tarabai was not ready to give up her claim over the kingdom. Finally, Shahu Maharaj decided to capture Satara, Capital of the Marathas. Tarabai also sent her troops under the leadership of Dhanaji Jadhav. Both the troops met at Kheda. Balaji Vishwanath, a trustworthy sardar of Shahu Maharaj persuaded Dhanaji Jadhav and he pretended to fight against Shahu Maharaj. “In Ashwin Vadya fortnight, probably on Dhantrayodashi, on 12 October 1707, the battle took place and Shahu got the victory.”¹⁴

The Battle of Khed and the victory have the historical importance in the history of not only Marathas, but also India. The victory proved that the real successor was Shahu Maharaj. Due to the victory of Shahu, the confidence was increased of the sardars who were on the side of Shahu. Many sardars joined him who were in the side of Tarabai. Shahu Maharaj captured Chandan Vandan and Torna Forts. Afterwards Shahu Maharaj turned

towards Satara. At that time Maharani Tarabai was at Panhala Fort. Shahu Maharaj attacked on the fort of Satara. The soldiers of Tarabai could not defend the fort. He captured the fort very easily. “Thus, the nation got back their king after a long and heroic struggle. The coronation ceremony was duly performed on 12th January 1708 with all the customary pomp and rituals.”¹⁵

Shahu Maharaj became the fifth Chhatrapati of the Swaraj. It was the beginning of the new chapter in the history. As earlier Chhatrapatis, he also introduced his *mudra* or royal seal.

“वर्धिष्णुर्विकर्मो विष्णो सामूर्तिरिन वामनी ।

शंभू सुनौरसो मुद्रा शिवराजस्य राजते ।।”¹⁶

As per the rules of the Maratha administration, he declared his Ashtpradhan Mandal. Bahiropanth Pingle was appointed as the Peshwa. Afterwards Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed Balaji Vishwanath as the Peshwa and a new era began in the history of Marathas. It was called as the Peshwa Era or Peshwaai.

4.1.4. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath

Balaji Vishwanath managed the affairs of the Maratha administration as a Peshwa from 1713 AD to 1720 AD till his death. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gave him robes of the Peshwaship in 1713 AD. In fact, Balaji Vishwanath requested the Chhatrapati to give him the robes of the Peshwaship and explained its importance. It was necessary to accept the advice considering the then conditions.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed new Peshwa and fixed the salary of the Peshwa along with the other Pradhans. The information about the salary of the Pradhans is found in an old yaadi. “Rajashree Balaji Pandit Pradhan- 13000, Pant Amatya- 12000, Chimnaji Pandit Sachiv, Naro Ram Mantri, Anandrao Dabir Sumant, Sakho Vitthal Nyayadhish – 10000 each, Khanderao Dabhade Senapati- 9000”¹⁷

The salary of the Peshwa was more than the other Pradhans. It shows that the authority and importance of the office.

4.1.4.1. The Inaam System

The *inaam* system which had been in the practice since the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was continued by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He conferred the new inaams as well as continued the old ones. He ordered to enjoy the inaams which were conferred by his grandfather, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. There is one inaampatra which was given in Rajyabhishek Shake 40 i.e. 1714 AD. As per the inaampatra, Suryajirao Somaji Kakde, father of Ranaji Suryajirao Kakde was given the land of thirty-six rukiya by making three chaawar at Pangare village in Irthadi taluqa in Pune province by Shivaji Maharaj at the time of Treaty of Purandar. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered to continue the inaam.

“तुम्ही स्वामीचे कदीम सेवक म्हणून सदरहू इनामपैकी महाराज राजश्री थोरले कैलासवासी यांनी राजगडाचे मुक्कामी तीन चावरापैकी एक चावर जमीन इनाम करार केली ती हल्ली स्वामीनी करार करुन अलहिदा सनदा सादर केल्या आहेत. तरी त्याप्रमाणे तुम्ही एक चावर जमीन इनाम अनुभवून पुत्रपौत्रादी वंशपरंपरेने सुखरूप राहणे.”¹⁸

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj showed his respect towards his grandfather through the continuation of the inam. He knew that there was a great heritage of Swaraj founded by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the adverse conditions. He made the inam hereditary.

4.1.4.2. Divisions of the Swaraj

One of the important roles of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the divisions of the Swaraj. He divided the Swaraj into provinces under the leadership of the Ashtpradhan and some other sardars. The structure and the appointments of the provinces have been given in detail in the book 'Thorle Shahu Maharaj Yanche Charitra'.

The responsibility of Akkalkot pargana was given to Fattehsing Bhosale. "(Shahu Maharaj) brought him up as his own son."¹⁹ Senapati Khanderao Dabhade was given Gujrat, Ahamadabad, Kathewad etc. Senasaheb Bhonsale was given Varhad, Gondwan, Katak and some mahals of Hindusthan; Pratinidhi was given Subha of Swadesh, Sachiv was given Mawal, some parts of Konkan; Sarlashkar was given Swaraj around the banks of Ganga River in Mughal India and the Pradhan (Peshwa) was given Khandesh, Malwa, Baglan subha"²⁰

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had strictly warned his sardars and soldiers that no one would touch even a grass without the permission of the farmer. The same policy was followed by his grandson, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He divided the Swaraj into provinces called Subhas and appointed chief on each subha. He warned his chiefs and the soldiers that no one would trouble or loot to any peasant without the order (of King). Follow the orders."²¹ Along with the warnings, there was order that when the king order to

produce themselves in front of the king, without getting late of a single moment they should be in the court. Whenever there would be transfer or exchange of the Subhas, immediately they should handover the authority and be present in front of the king.

The elucidation clears that there was the complete control and awe of the Chhatrapati over the sardars and the ministers. The king's decision was final decision. No one was allowed to take any administrative or political decision without the permission of the Chhatrapati.

4.1.4.3. The Office of the Karbhari

Everyone wants to exercise the power. Everyone wants to enjoy the rights of the superior offices. Though the Peshwaship was given as per the ability of the person, everyone thought that he was perfect for the office. It could cause threat to the unity and strength of the kingdom. If it took place in the family of Peshwa itself, the internal disputes could be dangerous for the Swaraj. The internal disputes and clashes are more dangerous than the external aggression. So, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj introduced a new system in the administration. "If the elder gets the post of Peshwa, the younger one from the same family was appointed as the Karbhari."²²

The farsightedness of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj could be seen through such appointments. He knew that the Peshwaship had more authorities than the other ministers in the Ashtpradhan. So, other would try to get the office, especially from the family of Peshwa. That's why he made such arrangements in the administration. If there is no one younger to the Peshwa, the other member from the same family or the sardar out of the family was appointed as the Karbhari. During the career of Balaji

Vishwanath, there was no one younger to him from his family so Abajipant Purnadare²³ was appointed as the Karbhari. Chimaji Appa was appointed as the Karbhari as Bajirao was the Peshwa. This system was continued.

4.1.4.4.Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Maratha Confederacy

The vatandari system was rampant during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai. Though there were advantages of the system, it had some disadvantages too. The Vatandars began to act as a king in their jurisdiction. It became a big challenge for the Chhatrapatis to keep a control on the vatandars. The Vatandars were exercising their authorities independently during the period of war of independence. Some vatandars were loyal towards the Swaraj, but not committed. Some were fighting the battles and getting the vatans independently and acting independently. Angre was acting as a rebel during the civil war between Tarabai and Shahu Maharaj. Afterwards Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had to suffer because of his rebellion.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj declared his Ashtpradhan Mandal after his coronation, but it didn't have so much importance as in Shiv Era. It lost its importance. There was threat to the administration due to the revolts and internal disputes. Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath suggested one solution to the Chhatrapati and he accepted it. The solution was the 'Maratha Confederacy'. The Chhatrapati and the Peshwa introduced a new administrative system against the privileged system which had been in use since Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

According to the system of Maratha Confederacy the ministers in the Ashtpradhan Mandal were given the responsibilities of different parts in

India wherever there was the rule of Marathas. The order was given that they should show their efficiency, fight the battles, expand their territories, manage the administration independently. But important rules were mentioned that they must give a specific share and be loyal to the Chhatrapati. If any changes were found in the work, their territory would be handed over to another sardars.

The borders of Malwa and Gujrat were fixed by the Chhatrapati. The territory of Gujarat was assigned to the house of Dabhade. “He passed orders that half the revenues of each provinces should be paid direct to the royal treasury by the Peshwa. The half of the Gujarat revenues should be allotted to the Dabhades for the upkeep of the army of occupation.”²⁴

As per the rule of the Maratha Confederacy, if any sardar failed to manage the affairs in the assigned territory, it would be transferred to someone else. The descendants of Khanderao Dabhade failed in their duty in Gujarat. “He (Yashwantrao Dabhade) became a victim to drink and opium. In course of time all the power of the house of Dabhade passed to their lieutenants, the descendants of Pilaji Gaikwad.”²⁵

One of the important features of the concept of the Maratha Confederacy was that everyone was ready to give his best as they were getting the complete authority of the allotted territories. As a result, the Maratha kingdom was transformed into a majestic Maratha Empire. Swaraj was not limited to Konkan or Maharashtra, but extended to the South and North. The powerful and efficient Maratha sardars spread the Maratha power all over India only due to the concept of the Maratha Confederacy.

The Shindes at Gwalior, the Holkars at Indore, the Gaikwads at Baroda, the Newalkar at Jhanshi etc. and many more Marathas spread all over India. Justice Ranade says, “The Marathas became capable to win Gujrath, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Orrisa, Gondwana, Nemad and in south Karnatak province till Tungbhadra due to this concept.”²⁶

Though the Maratha Confederacy was responsible to transform the Swaraj into a majestic empire, it became one of the reasons for the devaluation of the Chhatrapati in the future. After some years, especially after the death of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the chiefs of the subhas started to behave as a king in their territories. The rise of dynasty system took place as the subhas was transferred to the descendants of the chiefs. The chiefs started to fight among themselves. The battle took place between the Peshwa and the Senapati, the Peshwa and Nagpurkar Bhosale etc. It affected the dignity of the Chhatrapati. The Peshwas became dominant and the Chhatrapatis were humiliated by their own minister, the Peshwas.

During the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, all the chiefs in the Maratha Confederacy had to abide by the Chhatrapati due to his control and the excellent management. They were loyal to the Chhatrapati. “Shahu didn’t take side of anybody. Whatever was right, Shahu did; that’s why no one is superior in the Maratha Confederacy.”²⁷ Though the supreme rights were given to the chiefs in their respective territories, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had kept the central power with him and he compelled all of them to give their best for the Maratha Swaraj and the Empire under his supreme leadership. He made them obliged to the Swaraj.

If any chief from the Maratha Confederacy was misbehaving or delaying in the administration, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj rebuked the chief. Sometimes he handed over his territory to another. The Bhosale house was given the responsibility of Nagpur region. Raghuji Bhosale I was given the rights to collect the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in Gondwana region. The Nagpurkar Bhosales were valiant and accomplished. They had conquered the region till Bengal with their bravery. Later, the disagreement took place between the Peshwa and Bhosale. The disagreement reached to the peak and Bhosale began to maintain the friendly relations with the enemy of the Peshwa. When the Chhatrapati understood the policy of Bhosale, he took strict action against Bhosale. “He felt that this is not proper for the Swaraj and issued an order that Bhosale should obey the Peshwa.”²⁸

Due to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj’s aggressive stance and decisions, the Maratha confederacy was working in unity. The Chhatrapati’s role was very appropriate and balanced, but at the same time the importance of the Peshwa in the administration increased and later the administration began to move around the Peshwa.

4.1.5 The Role of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj about the Mughal Empire

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj established the Hindavi Swaraj to liberate the subject from the injustice and oppression of the Mughals and to defy the slavery of the exotics. He fought against the Mughals throughout his life. After him, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Mahrani Tarabai also fought against the Mughals to defend the Swaraj. Aurangzeb was in Deccan for twenty-seven years only to capture the

Maratha kingdom. But the stubborn and loyal Maratha army didn't let him get success in his ambition.

The Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era took the firm stand and dreamt to destroy the Mughal rule. But the policy of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was completely against his ancestors. He supported the Mughal rule instead of opposing them. He even came up with an idea of 'Maratha Swaraj under the Mughal Empire'. He followed this policy throughout his life. It can be seen in many instances.

Many kings, since ancient times, had been issuing coins in their names. In the same way Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj also issued coins. "Shivraai Hon, Fanam, Chakram, Padshahi Hon, Nishani Hon etc. Hons were issued."²⁹ "Shivraai, about 12 gram weight, coin was issued by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the time of his coronation."³⁰ The rulers of Vijaynagar Empire also had issued "Achyutraai, Ramchandrarai, Devrai etc."³¹ coins. The Guptas, The Satvahanas, the Sultans, the Mughals had issued the coins in their names. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had not issued any kind of coins in his name during his reign. He continued the old ones. Not only that the coins were minted in the name of Mughal rulers. "In Peshwaai, all the rupees were minted in the name of Mughal Emperors in Persian script."³²

This shows that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had indirectly accepted the Mughal rulers as his overlords. Kings or Emperors used to issue the coins in their names to prove their independence and sovereignty. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj proved by issuing coins in the name of Mughal rulers that he wanted to create Hindavi Swaraj under the Mughal Empire.

Prince Shahu came in Swaraj after the release from the captivity of the Mughals after the death of Aurangzeb. “He visited the dead Emperor’s tomb at Khuldabad walking there on foot.”³³ It shows the loyalty of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj towards the Mughal Empire and the Emperors.

The reason behind expressing respect to Aurangzeb was the love that Aurangzeb showed towards Shahu while he was in captivity. Aurangzeb always opposed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and had imprisoned him at Agra. Even he had assassinated Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. He wanted to destroy the Maratha Power from the Deccan, so he fought against Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai. In such a situation Prince Shahu was in the captivity of Aurangzeb from 1689 to 1707 AD. He would have done anything wrong with the life of the Prince of the Maratha kingdom, but he treated him with love and affection. Shahu’s original name was Shivaji, but he used to call him as Shahu. He made arrangements for Shahu’s education. He married Prince Shahu with the two girls of the Maratha sardars. He looked after Prince Shahu carefully nearly for eighteen years. He proved that he was a ‘*zinda pir*’.

Aware of Aurangze’s hospitality and humanity, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj expressed his loyalty and gratitude towards Aurangzeb and the Mughal Empire forever. This experience is often seen. “During the construction of Shaniwar Wada at Pune, Chhatrapati Shahu had warned Bajirao I not to have the gateway towards Delhi.”³⁴ It shows the respect for the Mughal Emperors in the heart of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He had respect for the other Mughal emperors even after the death of Aurangzeb.

The Marathas accepted the responsibility to protect the Mughal Empire, if needed, while the agreement of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. In a sense, the Marathas had a good opportunity to control the Mughal Empire, but the policy of the Chhatrapati was the reason which made the Marathas the vassal of the Mughal Empire. The Marathas accepted the responsibility to protect the Mughal Empire as well as to give tribute. G. S. Sardesai says, “Giving up the independence of Shivaji’s time, he accepted the subjection of the Badshaha.”³⁵ He didn’t want to dominate the Mughals by accepting the responsibility to protect the empire. In fact, he wanted to show by giving tribute that he was the vassal of Mughals.

According to the condition of the Mughals at the time of release of Shahu, it was obligatory to produce himself in the service of the Mughals with his troops if needed. It was necessary to accept such conditions considering the situation, because without accepting such conditions it was not possible for Shahu Maharaj to return in the Swaraj. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn’t forget the condition throughout his life. He always obeyed the condition.

When Bajirao I was busy in the expedition in South, the Chhatrapati wrote a letter to him and ordered to go to Delhi for the protection of the Mughal emperor immediately. He reminded the Peshwa in the same letter that he had committed to Aurangzeb and Mughal emperors. He said in the letter, “I have committed to Aurangzeb that I will be in his service whenever there will be a threat.”³⁶ This letter shows that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was loyal to the Mughal Empire.

Though the Chhatrapati was expressing his loyalty to the Mughals from time to time, the Peshwas wanted to conquer Delhi by defeating the Mughlas. But the Chhatrapati used to oppose the thoughts and the ideas of the Peshwas. The most important thing is that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj never ruled as a sovereign ruler. Always he ruled as the vassal of the Mughals. He wrote to Peshwa Bajirao I while opposing him,

“ राजश्री छत्रपती स्वामी ही बादशाही (आपल्याला) इच्छीत नाहीत जीर्णोद्धार केल्यास (ते) संतोष मानतील. बादशाहीचा बंदोबस्त केल्यास लौकिक मोठा आहे. मोडून टाकल्यास लौकिक नाही. कसा म्हणाल तर देवालयाचा जीर्णोद्धार केल्यास नविन लिंगाच्या स्थापनेपेक्षा अधिकोत्तर (श्रेय) आहे.”³⁷

He said that it was better to renew the temple instead of installing a new idol of the God. This statement expresses the views of the Chhatrapati about the Mughal Empire. If the old Shivling in a temple is removed and a new one is installed, it does not have any importance. On the contrary, after the restoration of the temple of the same Shivling, the one who has done the restoration becomes famous and people respect the person. The same views were of the Chhatrapati for the Mughal Empire. He was of the opinion that he would not get the name and fame by removing the Mughal Emperor and installing a Maratha king, but the Chhatrapati will get respect and fame by making the Mughal Empire powerful. In short, he wanted to create a Maratha Swaraj under the Mughal Empire.

4.1.6. The Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi

One of the important achievements of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was that the rights of Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi. “Shivaji initiated the policy to gain control over the vatans having the desh mukhi.”³⁸ The right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi was given to Shivaji Maharaj for not to invade the Subaas of the Mughals. Chauth and Sardeshmukhi were two types taxes collected in South India, particularly in the Maratha Empire during the medieval times. These two taxes became important sources of revenue for Maratha administration. Chauth was comprised of one fourth of the revenue. Sardeshmukhi was an additional levy of ten percent revenue which Shivaji claimed on being sardeshmukh.

When Aurangzeb came in Deccan, the administrative system of the Marathas collapsed. The rights of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi came to an end due to the invasion of Aurangzeb. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj tried to get the same right after 1707 after the death of Aurangzeb. Dautkhan Panni, Mughal Subhedar in Deccan, gave the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in some Mughal subhas as per a treaty with the Marathas. “This system lasted for four years from 1709 to 1713 AD.”³⁹ But Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar refused to recognize the treaty. At the same time Nizam-ul-mulk was appointed as a Subhedar in Deccan who was the staunch opponent of the Marathas. He also refused the right to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. After some days Nizam-ul-mulk was called back to Delhi and Sayyid Husain, one of the Sayyid brothers, was appointed as a Subhedar in Deccan in 1715 AD. Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath forced him to sign a treaty in 1718 AD. According to the treaty, Hussain Ali agreed to give the rights to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi and some another conditions. He also ensured to

get approval from the Mughal emperor. There was no value the treaty without recognition of the emperor. Hussain Ali suggested to Balaji Bajirao to come to Delhi along with his troops to get recognition. It was the great opportunity for the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa. The Peshwa wanted to observe the political situation in North India and politics in the Mughal court. One of the important tasks was that he wanted to release Maharani Yesubai, mother of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj who was in the captivity of Mughals since 1789 AD. The Chhatrapati was trying for it since 1707 AD. One more important thing was that the Mughal emperor had not given recognition to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj as the real successor of the Swaraj.

Emperor Farrukhsiyar did not give recognition to the treaty as there was disagreement between him and Sayyid Brothers. Sayyid Brothers imprisoned the emperor after going to Delhi. “This happened on the night between the 8th and 9th Jamadi II 1131 H. (27th -28th April 1719)”⁴⁰

The Sayyid brothers already had proclaimed that the new emperor was Rafi-ud-Darjat. They got recognition for three charters from the new emperor as per the promise which was given to the Marathas. “The Marathas also took with them at this time three important documents, a grant of the Chauth of Dakkin provinces, one for Sardeshmukhi of the same and one for the Swaraj or hereditary state.”⁴¹

The following conditions were recognized by the Sayyed brothers through the Mughal emperor:

1. “Handing over Swaraj and all the forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj’s era to Shahu Maharaj.

2. The regions like Khandesh, Gondwan, Varad, Hyderabad, Karnataka which were sold by Maratha chiefs to Mughals, should be attached to the Maratha Swaraj.
3. Maratha should be allowed to collect Chauthai and Sardeshmukh in southern part which was in the control of Mughals. Marathas should keep their army of 15,000 soldiers to help Mughals and to put check on dacoits and theft in southern part against the collection of Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi.
4. Shahu should not trouble Sambhaji of Kolhapur.
5. Marathas should give extortion of Rs. 10 lakh every year to the Mughal Emperor.
6. Shahu Maharaj's mother, Yesubai; family, Sambhaji's son Madansing are in the arrest of Mughal. These captives should be released.”⁴²

As per the above condition the charters of Chauth, Sardeshmukhi and Swaraj were given. Along with that Maharani Yesubai, brother Madansing and other relatives were released from the arrest of the Mughals.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had appointed Balaji Vishwanath as the Peshwa due his efficiency and accomplishment. The Peshwa proved the trust from time to time. He made Hussain Ali sign the treaty and got the recognition from the Mughal emperor. One of the important achievements was release of Maharani Yesubai from the captivity which was for thirty years. He proved that the appointment by the Chhatrapati was appropriate.

Though Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath forced the Mughal chiefs with his diplomatic strategy to sign the treaty of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi and got recognition from the Mughal emperors, he offered his credit and success at

the feet of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj with complete fidelity. He very politely handed over the charters to the Chhatrapati. This shows the Peshwa's utmost respect and loyalty to Shahu.

It was the great achievement of the Chhatrapati too. Considering some of the conditions in the agreement, the Chhatrapati's role in the political relations between the Marathas and Mughals Empire can be seen. The charter of the Swaraj brought by the Mughal emperor indicates that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the vassal of the Mughal Empire. The Treaty of Purandar was signed between Shivaji Maharaj and Mirzaraje Jaisingh on 9 June 1665. According to the treaty Shivaji Maharaj had to surrender twenty-three forts to Jaising. He had to accept the invitation to visit Agra. When he returned to Swaraj from Agra, he began to reconstruct the Swaraj. "The first plan was the recovery of the important forts."⁴³ He won all forts one by one which were given to the Mughals. He didn't go to Aurangzeb for any kind of charter for possession of the forts. He didn't demand charter for any territory. But he regained it with his strategy and powerful leadership whatever he had lost to mighty Aurangzeb.

On the contrary, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had to get recognition for Swaraj from the weak and powerless Mughal Emperor. His grandfather Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had expanded the Swaraj by fighting with Aurangzeb, his father Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj protected the Swaraj and died for its cause, his uncle Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj led from Jinjee to protect it and his aunty Maharani Tarabai put up a fight against Aurangzeb and didn't let him to conquer the Swaraj. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, descendant of the above Chhatrapatis, had to get recognition from the weak emperor who was almost not in the power. It was like accepting to

be a vassal of the Mughals. Along with that the Marathas had accepted to give ten lakh rupees to the emperor yearly. So, it proves that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj wanted to create Swaraj under the Mughal Empire. It meant that he didn't want to rule as a sovereign ruler. That's why the Nizam of Hyderabad never recognized him as a sovereign ruler.

Every coin has two sides. In the same way it is necessary to understand another side of the role of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj about his Mughal policy. Considering the then situation, his role and decision was appropriate. He had close experience of the Mughal army and administration for eighteen years. He knew that to fight against the mighty Mughals means to lose the army and treasury. He wanted to exercise the internal sovereignty by pretending as a vassal externally.

4.1.7. Supe: The Peshwa's Resident

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gave importance to even very minor things in the administration. That's why Balaji Vishwanath also performed every task and duty carefully and never forgot to inform him every detail of minor things too. He decided to stay at Supe as it was an appropriate location for him. But he didn't forget to the permission of the Chhatrapati. A letter gives information which was written by the Peshwa to Sivji Chintamani Fadnis. "Maharaj Rajashri has ordered me to stay at Supe."⁴⁴

4.1.8. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Peshwa Bajirao I

Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa in the Peshwaai, died at Saswad on 2 April 1720. So, the office of the Peshwa was vacant. Many efficient sardars in the court of Satara were capable for the post of Peshwaship. But

Chhatrapati's inclination was towards Bajirao I, son of Balaji Vishwanath. There was a lot of unforgettable contribution of Balaji Vishwanath in the journey of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj from the prince to the Chhatrapati. He could become Chhatrapati due to the diplomatic strategy of Balaji Vishwanath. There was a lot of influence of Balaji Vishwanath's efficiency and accomplishment in the political career of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj from 1713 AD to 1720 AD. The main reason for Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj to prefer Bajirao's name for the post of Peshwa was his father Balaji Vishwanath's strong devotion and loyalty to him. He was aware of Balaji's contribution for the Swaraj and with the same realization, he wanted to contribute for his contribution. He had a good opportunity to fulfill his wish in the form of Bajirao I. So, he decided to appoint him as a Peshwa.

One more thing should be understood along with the above reasons. The role of the Chhatrapati was not only to express his gratitude towards the service of Balaji Vishwanath, but he wanted an efficient administrative and brave warrior for the office of Peshwa like Balaji Vishwanath. There is a proverb in Marathi which means 'a pot is as the potter and a son as his father'. In the same way the Chhatrapati found that Bajirao was the perfect for the Peshwaship. His belief turned into fact in future.

"Bajirao I was born on 18 August 1700, Sunday (Vikramnaam Samvatsar, Bhadrapad Shuddh 15 Shake 1622)."⁴⁵ "He is also known by the name Bajirao Ballal."⁴⁶ He had actively participated in the Maratha administration before becoming the Peshwa. He had close experience of the administration. In 1711 AD, the disagreement took place between Balaji Vishwanath and Chandrasen Jadhav, commander-in-Chief due to some issue and Chandrasen attacked Balaji Vishwanath. Bajirao I was with his father at

that time. In 1716 AD, Damaji Thorat imprisoned Balaji Vishwanath with treachery. At this time also he was with his father. Balaji Vishwanath visited Delhi to get the charters of Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi between 1718 and 1719 AD. Bajirao I was with his father. Bajirao's political, military and administrative training took place under the tutelage of his father Balaji Vishwanath. Therefore, he became mighty and diplomatic leader like his father.

4.1.8.1. Appointment of Bajirao I as a Peshwa

Bajirao had observed and studied the power and administration of the Mughals through experience before becoming the Peshwa himself. That's why the Chhatrapati took firm stand to appoint Bajirao as the Peshwa. He was aware of the anarchy in Mughal administration and the miserable condition of the Mughal Emperor, that's why he coined the slogan "Hindu Pad Padshahi" or The Hindu Empire"⁴⁷

Though Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj wanted to appoint Bajirao as Peshwa, he could not appoint him easily. Many sardars were interested for the responsibility and some were doubtful about the appointment of Bajirao, so they were opposing the appointment. Some sardars opposed the decision easily and those were Anandrao Samant, Naro Ram Mantri, Khanderao Dabhade etc. Shripatrao Pratinidhi was prominent among the opponents to the decision. He was trying to get the office for himself. Though there was a lot of resistance to his decision, the Chhatrapati was firm on his decision. But he didn't want to disappoint anyone in the court. He himself wrote to Bajirao about his opinion, "The idea of giving you robes is in my mind, but

Shripatrao Pratinidhi and Ashtpradhan are of opinion that the office should not be given to the Koknastha.”⁴⁸

The dilemma of the Chhatrapati can be seen through the letter. He could have appointed anyone in the office of Peshwa by using the supreme power of the Chhatrapati, but at the same time he didn't want to hurt anyone in the court. He knew that it would not be appropriate to disappoint the courtesans. If the clay is too wet, it will be difficult to make the pot. So, the potter waits for the mud to thicken and then makes a beautiful pot out of it. In the same way the Chhatrapati was waiting for the storm of ideas to calm down which was occurring in the mind of the courtesans. The Chhatrapati very cleverly reduced the opposition. He appealed all the courtesans to trust on the appointment of Bajirao as a Peshwa. While appealing, the Chhatrapati decided not to hurt anyone, but assured them that if Bajirao was unable to carry out his responsibilities as Peshwa, he would be immediately removed from the office. So, the courtesans agreed with the appointment. “Shahu Maharaj invested Bajirao with the robes of honour for the post of Peshwa on 17th April 1720 at a place called Masur, thirty miles of Satara.”⁴⁹

“Abajipant was managing the affairs of the office of the Peshwa after Balaji Vishwanath till the appointment of Bajirao.”⁵⁰ The Peshwas and other ministers used to use the seal of their names for the official correspondence or documentation. Bajirao I also made a new seal after receiving the robes of the Peshwaship.

“श्री राजा शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

बाजीराव बल्लाळ मुख्य प्रधान” ⁵¹

The Chhatrapati's nature was too affable. The selfishness and hypocrisy could never be seen in his nature. Peshwa Bajirao I opposed some of the policies of the Chhatrapati, but he remained abstemious, because he knew that his decisions would work properly and the time would be the proof of his policies. He got the ability and expertise of Bajirao I through his reasoning. Bajirao had given one statement regarding the expansion of Maratha Empire. "Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree (Mughal Empire) and the branches will fall themselves."⁵²

Bajirao I himself proved the trust of the Chhatrapati on him and his ideas about the expansion of the Maratha Empire in future. He threatened with his bravery to the Nizam of Hyderabad, Siddis of Janjira, Mughal sardars etc. and converted the Maratha kingdom into an Empire.

4.1.8.2. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and the Army

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had introduced a new system in the administration and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj followed the same system. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj appointed one of the close relatives of a soldier, who died in the battle field, in the service of the Swaraj and pension for the wife of the deceased soldier. It can be proved through an order issued by him after the battle of Pratapgad. Afzalkhan of Bijapur attacked over Swaraj and Shivaji Maharaj killed him. After that a battle took place between the army of Marathas and Bijapur and some of the Maratha soldiers died in the battle. The king respected the sacrifice of the deceased soldiers and issued a farmaan and ordered that the children of the deceased soldiers in the battle should be appointed in the army. As well as "the widows of those who had no sons, should be maintained by (a pension of) half their (husband) pay"⁵³

Not only for the deceased soldiers he paid respect and honor, but the same respect was paid for the injured soldiers in the battle. He issued a farman for the injured soldiers. “The wounded were given rewards of two hundred, one hundred, fifty or twenty-five Hons per man according to the nature of their wounds.”⁵⁴

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was an ideal king. He not only gave importance to the soldiers in his army, but he looked after the family of the soldiers who sacrificed their life for the cause of Swaraj. That’s why he was known as the ‘Well-known King and the king of the peasants.

The same policy was followed by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He always gave respect to the Maratha soldiers who sacrificed their life to transform the Swaraj into the majestic Empire. He invested the land as innaam to the family members of the dead soldiers in the battles. A letter which was written on 20th June 1724 gives this information. In this letter, Bajirao Subhanji Rannware wrote that his grandfather Manaji Rannware died in the battle against Udaji Chavan. So, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj granted land as innaam to the son of Manaji Rannware. “So, a land reward was given and a reward letter addressed to my father.”⁵⁵ It shows the respect and loyalty of the Chhatrapati towards the soldiers.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj showed his respect not only for the soldiers and the sardars during his reign, but also the soldiers who sacrificed their life for the Swaraj and contributed for the expansion and development of the Maratha kingdom during reign of the previous Chhatrapatis. Pralhad Lingoji and Murar Ramchandraprabhu Rajapurkar were in the service of the Swaraj when Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was at Jinjee and even after him.

For their service, “Considering service and the hard work, Late Rajaram Saheb and Maharani Tarabaai granted a village as a reward in Rajapur province.”⁵⁶ The vatan was continued till the reign of Kanhoji Angre. There was the control of Angres on the province as the territory was under the command of the family. During the reign of Sambhaji Angre, the vatans were cancelled due to some reasons. So, Pralhad Lingoji and Rajapurkar convinced Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and requested to permit the vatans again. The Chhatrapati appreciated the service and loyalty of both of them and he wrote a letter to Sambhaji Angre on 20 September 1740⁵⁷ and ordered him to allow exercising the vatans to Pralhad lingoji and Rajapurkar as before. It shows the Chhatrapati’s respect for Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai.

The Maratha Swaraj was increasing day by day due to the service and victories of the soldiers. The Chhatrapati was aware of the fact. That’s why he ordered to continue the vatans which were granted to the families of the soldiers. Naro Shankar was Pant Sachiv of the Chhatrapati. He had contributed in the strengthening the Swaraj by participating in various battles actively. Naro Shankar’s father Shankarani Narayan was also the Pant Sachiv. “In 1707 Shahu confirmed the Jagir of Shankaraji Narayan Sachdev to his son Naro Shankar and the hereditary title Pant Sachiv.”⁵⁸ Naro Shankar had helped a lot during the period of struggle of Shahu Maharaj. He was in the service of Swaraj and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj from 1707 to 1736 AD. Remembering the contribution of Naro Shankar, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj conferred the vatan of Sahotri to his son Chimnaji Narayan. In the letter which was written on 08 November 1736 the Chhatrapati wrote, “The vatan of Sahotri was conferred to Naro Shankar. He

died. Considering the necessity of the right of son Rajashri Chimnaji Narayan, the king conferred the vatan to him for lifetime with mercy.”⁵⁹

Punyashlok Shahu Maharaj always showed his kindness and love to the sardars in Swaraj. He expressed his gratitude towards the sardars even after their life too and allowed to enjoy the vatans, jagirs, inaams by their descendants. In this way he expressed the respect for the service and sacrifice of the sardars for the Swaraj.

4.1.8.3. The Chhatrapati's Control over the Peshwa

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's faith in Peshwa Bajirao I was growing stronger. The accomplishment of the Peshwa was responsible for that. Though the Chhatrapati had given administrative freedom to the Peshwa, he always showed his loyalty to the king. He gave each and every detail to the king about any decision taken by him. The Chhatrapati also informed about every decision taken by him. A dispute took place between Abaji Tryambak Purandare and Atre about the functions of Kulkarni and Deshkulkarni. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj settled the dispute and ordered that the Kulkarn and half Deshkulkarn of Saswad should be granted to Purandare and half Deshkulkarn should be granted to Atre. The Chhatrapati wrote a letter to the Peshwa and in 1734 immediately after the settlement and gave all the details. “The settlement had been taken place about their vatans. Two thousand Sherani has been confirmed. It is written to inform you.”⁶⁰

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj is well-known as *Punyashlok* in the history. He was called as *Punyashlok* because of his 'shahu' or kind nature. He was unique with the qualities like very loving, calm nature, strong decision-making ability, timely decisions in administration and most

important thing was that he had a lot of respect for the sardars and ministers in the Ashtapradhan. A king, who is very kind, should be very strict as per the situation. If any minister is misbehaving or is not following the order, the king should take strict action against such a minister. In the same way Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was very kind, but at the same time he was too strict about the discipline and the administration. It can be seen through a letter which was written to Bajirao. The Chhatrapati had called the Peshwa for a visit, but the Peshwa didn't respond to the order. The king wrote a letter to the Peshwa and ordered to be in the court immediately.

“Five-ten order letters have been sent to you to come. But you didn't think to come. Even after writing many tricks, not a single letter was answered. The king has seen for the first time such a behavior. After this, as soon as you get this letter, come to see the king.”⁶¹

The letter was written in the year 1730 AD. The Chhatrapati had used very strict words for the Peshwa. He used to praise the Peshwa from time to time on his achievements. There was a lot of trust over the Peshwa of the king that's why he was given freedom to take decision in some areas of the administration. He had given order to Babuji Naik to provide financial help to the Peshwa without any kind of hesitation. The Naik family was from Baramati. They were the moneylenders. Krishnaji Naik, from the same family, had helped Shahu Maharaj during the beginning of his career. “Naik had provided finance to Shahu till the coronation at Satara.”⁶² “Balaji Vishwanath had given his sister Bhiubaai to Abaaji Naik.”⁶³ He was brother of Babuji Naik.

Babuji Naaik helped financially to the Peshwa time to time as per the orders of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The Peshwa always used to be busy in the expeditions. That's why he required money continuously. But sometimes it was difficult to return the amount of debt. Once, Babuji Naaik complained against Bajirao I to the Chhatrapati. The Chhatrapati told to Naaik, "Bajiro doesn't borrows money for his enjoyment. So, you should understand the Peshwa. Instead of getting involved in argument, Peshwa should be helped."⁶⁴

Both the above letters help to understand the Chhatrapati's role in the administration in the case of Bajirao I. On the one hand, Bajirao was late to be present in Satara, so a disciplined Chhatrapati was harsh in his words and on the other hand a vigilant Chhatrapati understood that the Peshwa was late in paying off debts. This is an excellent example of an excellent administration of an excellent ruler. "The crowning feature of Bajirao's activities was his march to Delhi in 1736."⁶⁵ Bajirao I decided to attack Delhi directly and tried to carry it out. All this was possible only due to Chhatrapati's excellent administrative planning.

Arsenal is one of the important aspects in the administration. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, like other matters, was vigilant about armaments and its renewal from time to time. While having arms does not mean that the state is strong, it needs to be renewed. The Chhatrapati was very cautious about the matter. Ababji Purandare informs about the order of the Chhatrapati to Bajirao I and Chimaji Appa through a letter which was written on 18 April 1735. "Yesterday evening the king called and ordered that I tell you again and again about the *mod* (the different metals of which guns are cast), but still the *mod* is not being brought. Here Rajashri Swami

calls once-twice a day and warns to bring *mod*.”⁶⁶ When Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj observed the delay of Bajirao I and Chimaji Appa in their duty, he ordered to send the metals for the gun immediately.

The Chhatrapati was aware of the accomplishment of the Peshwa. So, he supported him from time to time and rebuked too, whenever he was wrong. Along with that he gave guidance on how to be a dutiful minister. Maurya Emperor Chandragupta Maurya’s political guru Kautilya, who wrote ‘Arthashastra’ on politics, says about the duties of a king, “An ideal king should know how to govern in normal times and in times of the crisis. King should have the foresight to avail himself of the opportunities the right times, place and type of action.”⁶⁷

The thoughts of Kautilya’s are applicable to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He used to think carefully about what decisions should be taken at what time. He wrote a letter to Bajirao I and guided him about the duties of ministers with various examples. The letter is very important regarding the role of Chhatrapati in the administration. The letter also throws light on the other facet of Shahu Maharaj. He appreciates the bravery and service of the Peshwa and said that everything about the Peshwas is excellent. Bajirao’s fame will remain on this planet for many years. Even if success and fame are achieved, he would not fall short in the service of Swami.

The Chhatrapati got a complain about Bajirao I that in judging, he decides in favor of the person who gives more money out of greed and hope for money. Then the Chhatrapati complained to Purnadare, Mutalik of Peshwa in the court of Satara, about Bajirao I. He said, “Eminence should not be tarnished.”⁶⁸ The king gave the example of Dadoji Konddev while

making him understand. Dadoji Konddev was very fair. He was also great for the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb because of the justice he gave. “द्रव्याची आशा न बाळगता वरकड द्रव्य न मिळे म्हणाल तर रास्ती इनसाफ केला आणि ख-यापासून अगर खोटयापासून जे घेईन म्हणटले ते घ्यावयाची सता आहे.”⁶⁹

The above letter gives information about the role of the Chhatrapati regarding the duties of the Peshwa. On one side, he was extremely sure about the efficiency of Bajirao I, but on the other side he was doubtful about the judicial policy of Bajirao I. The important thing was that he didn't complain directly to the Peshwa. He ordered to the Mutalik of the Peshwa to convey his message to him. It can be seen through the letter that if he wanted to give his message on a sensitive subject, he didn't speak directly to the Peshwa. He conveyed the message with a lot of care. He was not sure about whatever complaints he received against Bajirao I. But being an emperor, he could not neglect the mistakes of a minister. So, the king informed his minister in very easy and honest words.

One more aspect can be observed while studying the letter. He gave the example of Dadoji Konddev, who was a Brahmin. He mentioned him as a “little Brahmin”⁷⁰ Probably he wanted to suggest to the Peshwa that Bajirao was also a Brahmin and being a Brahmin, he should not expect such a type of earning.

4.1.8.4. Dominance of the Women from Peshwa Family

Day by day the office of Peshwa was becoming more powerful. The women from the Peshwa family began to participate in the administration. Radhabaai, Kashibaai, Gopikabaai, Gangabaai etc. contributed to move the administration around the Peshwa by actively participating in the

administration. One of the prominent women was Radhabaai. “Radhaabai was the wife of Balaji Vishwanath.”⁷¹ She was the mother of Bajirao I and Chimaji Appa. All the affairs in the family of Peshwa were managed by her advice. Afterwards she began to participate in the administration.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had strictly warned his sardars not to take their wives and children along with them during the expeditions and wars. The rule was followed even after him very strictly. But Radhaabai interfered and made changes in the rule. “Radhabaai started the Mughal custom of taking wife during the expeditions in the Peshwa family so as not to spoil men, to avoid debauchery and addicts.”⁷²

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj always respected the women in the Peshwa family. He knew that even women were efficient as like the men in Bhat family. He showed his caring towards women in Peshwa family from time to time. There was a lot of respect for Anubai, sister of Bajirao I. “Shahu Maharaj conferred Ajare village to Anubai after the death of her husband.”⁷³

He respected the decisions taken by Radhabai. It was like indirect consent to the decisions. The policy of Radhabai was appropriate to some extent. There are many instances in history that many rulers followed debauchery. Radhabaai had fear about such a custom, so she changed the rule made by the first Chhatrapati and ordered to take wives during expeditions.

The Chhatrapati had faith in the women of the Peshwa family; he too could not do anything about it. But the ill effects of this practice became apparent. During the third battle of Panipat the Maratha sardars were

accompanied by their families. It was the one of the reasons of the defeat of the Marathas.

4.1.8.5. The Chhatrapati's Strict Watch on the Peshwa

Sometimes Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn't hesitate to take doubt at the Peshwa openly. At one side he used to appreciate the efficiency of the Peshwa and on the other hand he gave strict warning to Peshwa Bajirao I to perform his duties. It was the strong wish of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj that Dahigao should be conquered by the Peshwa. He had ordered him for the same, but there was no response of Bajirao for the order. He was on the expedition, but he was not getting success there. So, the Chhatrapati was doubtful about the duty of the Peshwa. He expressed his views to Purandare, Mutalik of the Peshwa in the court of Satara. Afterwards Purandare wrote a letter on 24 September 1739 to him and wrote about the whole discussion between him and the King about Bajirao. He wrote, "The capture of Dahigao is not certain. From that the King asks me that the Peshwa is working by stages. Victory over Dahigao is still not achieved. It seems like he has betrayed. That's what he says."⁷⁴

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was suspicious of Peshwa and complained to his Mutalik about it. Chhatrapati used the word '*taala*'. He was doubtful about the working of Peshwa regarding Dahifal expedition, so he said openly that the Peshwa was betraying the king.

Bajirao I had a lot of affection towards Mastani along with his wife. After coming in contact with Mastani, initially he was spending more time with her. Chhatrapati got the matter. The king and his ministers should give importance to their personal life after the administration and welfare of the

subject. If they are giving importance to their personal life rather than the state interest, there will be difficulties in the development of the state. Initially, Bajirao used to take Mastani with him to Satara whenever he visited Chhatrapati. Once, he stayed at Satara for a long period. Due to Mastani, he could not visit the king for long time and even he forgot to return from Satara. The king came to know about the behavior of the Peshwa. He became angry and he expressed his anger before Joshi and Anagal, who were moneylenders and close friends of Bajirao. “You are here in Satara for last four months, but you came in the court once or twice. Nowadays, you stay with your beloved woman (Mastani). This is not fair. (If you continue the behavior) you will not get your office. It would be good, if you realized.”⁷⁵

4.1.8.6. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Janjira

Konkan was a very important part of the western part of the region under the rule of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. It has a lot of importance as it is situated on the seashore. Many travelers, traders, missionaries arrived in India during medieval period from Western Asia, Africa etc. Initially, they carried out the trading and spread of their religion, afterwards they entered into the politics of India and established their rule over Indians. They created their colonies. One of them was at Janjira which was established by Siddis. “The Arab El Habish the people of north-east Africa, were known as Habshis, or more often as Sidis.”⁷⁶ “The term ‘sidi’ originally is a term of respect a corrupt form of syed.”⁷⁷ “They obtained permission from Ram Patil, the chief of the island, to land 300 large boxes supposedly containing wine and silk.”⁷⁸ Afterwards they established their power there itself.

Those Siddis had been bothering the Marathas since the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. They took the advantage of the freedom struggle of Marathas and expanded their power around Janjira. Not only that the Siddis had supported Aurangzeb against the Marathas. So, Aurangzeb had conferred them the territories and forts of Ratnagiri, Dabhol, Mahad and Raigad.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj turned to Konkan after strengthening his power in Swaraj. It was necessary to have control over the parts of Konkan for the expansion of the Maratha Empire. Raigad was in Siddi's possession. The Chhatrapati had succeeded in winning Raigad under the leadership of Pratinidhi and Bajirao I. Therefore, the confidence of the Marathas was further strengthened to defeat Siddi. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj started the right moves to win Janjira by defeating Siddis. Initially, Chhatrapati's intention was to negotiate and get Siddis's territory. He decided to seek the help of a foreign ruler instead of seeking the help of an Indian ruler. He sought the help of an English trader as a mediator. But he didn't forget to inform his ideas to the Peshwa. He wrote a letter to the Peshwa on 30 January 1733.

“A decent person had come from the English. He says to mediate and make a deal. So, you wrote to Rajashri Amrutrao Trimbak. He said, it is Swami's intention to make such a treaty. It will be better if this happens at the initiative of the English.”⁷⁹

The war is not the solution for every expedition. The territory can be brought under the control with negotiations. This is one of the excellent policies of a good ruler. The Chhatrapati took decision for negotiations. He

told to the Peshwa that there was no loss at all in the negotiations. He goes on to say that the best decision will be made as per the situation.

Though he was trying for the negotiations, but there was no positive result for the efforts. Finally, he decided to launch an expedition against the Siddis. He appointed Peshwa Bajirao for the campaign against Siddi. Rasul Khan, Siddi ruler, died in 1733 AD. The war of succession took place in Siddi family. Abdulla opposed the son of Rasul Khan. He wanted to succeed the throne. So, Siddi Rahaman, son of Abdulla, decided to seek the help of the Marathas. It was a good opportunity for the Chhatrapati. As soon as the Chhatrapati got the information, he sent the Peshwa towards Janjira along with the troops.

Peshwa Bajirao I started the expedition against the Siddis in April 1733. He conquered Rajapuri, Khokari, Birwadi, Ghosale, and Thalkshatra which were under the control of the Siddis. Though the beginning of the expedition was successful, it remained incomplete. Although the campaign was incomplete, it did not fail. Bajirao signed a treaty in December 1733. “According to treaty, Siddi Abdul Rahman was placed on the throne of Janjira and the forts were taken. Out of them, Maharaj (Chhatrapati Shahu) kept Raigad and Mahad with him and Bajirao got the Varkad Fort.”⁸⁰

Bajirao returned disappointed due to the internal disputes and helplessness of the sardars. But the Chhatrapati was firm on his decision. He ordered to Sambhaji Angre to begin expedition against the Siddis. Sambhaji Angre wrote a letter to the Chhatrapati on 5 November 1735 and informed about his preparation for the expedition. “Swami (the Chhatrapati) sent a mandate. It is an order to begin an expedition for Gowalkot. The detailed

information about the expedition has been sent to Khanderao and Bhaskar Vaidya.”⁸¹

This shows how anxious Chhatrapati was for the Janjira expedition. Though the ministers or sardars retreat in the battle field, the king doesn't retreat. There is not any kind of bad impact when the ministers retreat in the battle field in the presence of the king. But when a king retreats in the battle field, it is complete defeat of the king. Victory belongs to the king as long as he is determined. This is evident from the role of the Chhatrapati.

It was his strong determination to conquer Janjira at any cost. Chimaji Appa too contributed in the expedition along with the other sardars. The Chhatrapati had a lot of faith in Chimaji Appa along with Peshwa. That's why he used to motivate and guide Chimaji Appa from time to time. It can be seen through a letter which was written by the Chhatrapati to Chimaji Appa on 10 December 1735.

“Rajashri Chimaji Appa should enter into Konkan with troops and defeat the Habsis.....so, it is the wish of Rajashri (Chhatrapati) that Swami (Chimaji Appa) should enter to achieve the aim.”⁸²

In this letter the Chhatrapati used the words '*natijaa dyaavaa*'. These are very important words. He is confident that Chimaji Appa would definitely complete the task. That's why he ordered him to complete the task. But sometimes the king should not be very much confident about his ministers. It can be observed through the policies of the Chhatrapati. Though he had a lot of faith in the Peshwa and Chimaji Appa, it was not so comprehensive. A ruler should keep a watch on the movements and behavior of his ministers as on the enemy. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj followed this

policy during the expedition of Janjira. He had kept watch on Bajirao and Chimaji Rao along with the army of enemy, to such an extent that he appointed secret agents to keep a watch on them. This is mentioned in the letter which was written on 17 December 1735. Peshwa Bajirao himself told the account of his meeting with the Chhatrapati to Chimaji Appa. “Rajashri spoke on it to tell whether Chimaji Appa goes or not. Then Rajashri’s spies came there. They told, ‘the tent is set up outside, but there is no sign of the movements.’..... He then ordered them to go immediately and bring the explanation.”⁸³

This policy of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj is commendable. He appointed spies to keep a watch on his own ministers and tried to complete the expedition. After that Peshwa Bajirao, Chimaji Appa, Sambhaji Angre concentrated on the mission and followed the rapid movements accordingly. Chimaji Appa and Pilaji Jadhav attacked over the army of Siddis at Rewasa. The battle is known as the Battle of Rewasa. Siddi Sat was killed in the battle on 19 April 1736. Siddi Yakut was also killed. So, Siddi Rahaman became ready for the negotiations. Siddi Sat was put to death so it was the great achievement of Chimaji Appa. So, Brahmendra Swami, the then religious head of Hindus, said, “By killing Siddi Sat, a demon of the type of Ravana, you have uprooted the very life of the Siddis and earned an undying fame.”⁸⁴

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj became very happy with the achievement of Chimaji Appa. He offered him various gifts including costly ornaments, dresses, a sword set with diamonds. There was no option in front of Siddis, but to sign the treaty. Anjanvel and Gowalkot were given to Siddis. The treaty weakened the power of the Siddis. They gave up their policy of

fighting against the Marathas and became ready to remain as their vassal. The Peshwa could easily establish the rule of Marathas in the region of Konkan.

4.1.8.7. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Raigad

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj made Raigad the capital of Swaraj after Rajagd. Yashwantrao More, chief of More family fled and took a shelter at Rayri and Prataprao More fled to Vijapur. Shivaji Maharaj laid siege to Rayari on 06 April 1656 and in the month of May captured it. After this conquest he renamed Rayari as Raigad and declared it the new capital of Swaraj.

In 1689, after the assassination of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj by Aurangzeb, Mughal captured the fort. “it was decided the handover the fort to Zulfikarkhan in the month of Kartik and it was handed over on the day Shake 1611 Margshirsh Shukl 1, 3 November 1689.”⁸⁵ Since that day, Raigad lost its freedom. Due to the further political movements, the next Maratha rulers ignored the Raigad.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj realized the importance of the fort during his reign. So, he decided to recapture the fort. To achieve his intention, he followed the necessary movements. For the first time Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj turned his attention towards the fort in 1717 AD. He had become the Chhatrapati of the Swaraj, but he used to get restless whenever he used to think about Raigad. He felt that unless the capital of the Swaraj, Raigad, was included in the Swaraj, he could not become a full-fledged Chhatrapati.

The important part of the Swaraj, the Raigad was under the control of the Siddis of Janjira and they were loyal to the Badshah (Mughal).⁸⁶ The actual process of capturing the Raigad began in 1733. “Shahu decided to provide money for the campaign and started the correspondence.”⁸⁷ Pantpratinidhi, Bajirao Peshwa, Fattesinh Bhosale arrived at Pachad with the troops. After reaching Pachad, Pantpratinidhi wrote a letter to the Chhatrapati and requested for next order. The Chhatrapati replied to the letter on 30 May 1733, “Capture Raigad by following the necessary diplomacy.”⁸⁸

Chhatrapati wanted Raigad at any cost. That’s why Ambaji Trambak Purandare, Pilaji Jadhav marched towards Raigad. At last the Marathas captured Raigad successfully. “The news that the Marathas had conquered Raigad reached in Mumbai on 14 June.”⁸⁹

The news of conquering Raigad made the Chhatrapati extremely happy, because Raigad was the pride of Swaraj. It was the spirit and soul of the Swaraj. It was the base of the Swaraj. The victory of Raigad was one of the important achievements and campaigns of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The victory of Chhatrapati’s army and sardars gives a glimpse of his excellent leadership. He led the expedition and guided the army through correspondence itself. They could get victory over Raigad due the inspiration and motivation of Shahu Maharaj. His words proved as power boosters for the army and the grand victory took place. He didn’t forget to appreciate the ministers and the army after the great achievement. He wrote a letter to admire Pratinidhi, Chi. Fattesingbaba and the Peshwa in his own handwriting on 20 June 1733. “The fame of the victory has spread all over

the universe. It has reached to Nizam-ul-Mulk and Delhi. The fame and achievement must last forever.”⁹⁰

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn't lead battles or expeditions in large extent on the battle field like his grandfather and father. But he had the administrative skills and skillful leadership to decide which chief to send on which expedition and to get the task done right from the sardars and ministers. It can be seen through the expeditions of Janjira and Raigad in which he made it successful with his best leadership.

4.1.8.8. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur

The battle of Khed, 1707 AD became historic and decisive. A treaty took place between Maharani Tarabai and Shahu Maharaj and the Swaraj was divided into two thrones i.e. Satara and Kolhapur. Chhatrapati ruled over Satara throne and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II, son of Maharani Tarabai ruled from the throne of Kolhapur. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II ruled till 1714 AD. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj II succeeded the throne of Kolhapur. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj II were cousins. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj II ruled for a long time, but he didn't have qualities of a good ruler. He didn't expand his kingdom, but instead tried to create obstacles in Shahu Maharaj's political career. He considered him as his enemy. He used the policy 'enemy's enemy is friend' against his brother, Shahu Maharaj. He joined hands with Nizam, who was Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's enemy, and conspired against him.

Punyashlok Shahu Maharaj, however, handled the matter very cleverly and sensibly. When he got that his cousin had joined Nizam, he wrote a letter to him and tried to console him.

“This state is of Shree (God). How will you get victory by seeking shelter of Yawans (Muslims)? If you were greedy for the kingdom, you should have told me. I have many valiant people who have got victory in all directions. Some of them would have been sent for your help and won a kingdom. Or you should have shown your feat. Or I regain the kingdom won by the Yawans. You too could have won instead of it (joining Nizam).”⁹¹

From the language of the above letter, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj’s magnanimity, rationality and profound thoughts can be seen. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj too had written such a type of letter to his half brother Vyankoji Bhosale and informed him that he was ready to help him anytime. The same role of Shahu Maharaj can be seen through the letter for his cousin. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was politically weak than Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, but Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj never took advantage of Sambhaji Maharaj’s incompetence and never thought of conquering his kingdom by attacking over his territory. On the contrary, he motivated him to expand his kingdom and showed his readiness to send his powerful and efficient sardars and troops to help him. King Ramchandra, an ideal king in Hindu mythology, sacrificed his right over Ayodhya for his half brother Bharata and Bharata also sacrificed the throne for his brother Ramchandra. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj made him aware about the qualities which he possessed. He told him that he had also regained the kingdom from the Yavanas, so Sambhaji Maharaj too should win the territory won by the Yavanas instead of taking their shelter.

He further added, “This is not fair to seek the shelter of Yavanas. You should return at any cost. I will try to get whatever you want. You will be provided more funds than your needs.”⁹²

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj knew that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj established the Swaraj by facing a lot of problems and obstacles. He faced the strongest enemy, the Mughals. He wanted to free the people from the exploitation of the Yavans. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj sacrificed his life for the cause of the Swaraj. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also wanted to carry out the same policy. So, he didn't want the internal disputes in the Bhosale family. He made Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj aware of the objectives of the establishment of Swaraj by giving him an understanding with sensible words born from his high thoughts.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj used all means to convince Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, but all his efforts didn't work. Finally, he decided to defeat him by using political means. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj established friendly relations with Nizam. It should not be repeated in the future, so he started an expedition against him from the region of Varana River along with Peshwa, Pratinidhi and Senapati. The preparation had been going on for six months. He wrote a letter to Tryambakrao Dabhade and ordered him that the Vada in Heral should be conquered and Chavan should be reproved by staying around Kolhapur. He called Bajirao, Shambhusing Jadhav, Sidhajirao Nimbalkar, Shekhoji Angre, Pilaji Jadhav etc. “Chhatrapati Sambhaji also started the preparation. Vyankatro Ghorpade and Bhagwantrao Pant Amatya encamped before Shahu Maharaj with their troops for war.”⁹³

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered his troops to attack over the army of Kolhapur. Satara's army attacked the unconscious army of Kolhapur. The Kolhapur army could not face the strong attack of the army of Satara. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and Udaji Chavan escaped and took shelter at Panhala. "Pratinidhi got a hold of Tarabai, Rajasbai, Jiajabai, Vyankatro Ghorpade, Bhagwantrao Pant. They got booty in a large amount."⁹⁴

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had a skill to take right decision at the right moment. That's why he could defeat Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj easily. The sardars and the army also are as important as Senapati. He wanted to weaken the side of Sambhaji, so he convinced his chiefs to join him. Most of the sardars from the side of Sambhaji Maharaj were in the favor of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. "Shahu pleased them and joined them into his service."⁹⁵ That's why Sambhaji Maharaj's army was weakened and the army of Satara got victory easily.

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj didn't have any option, but negotiations with Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He arrived at Satara and stayed there for two months. "A treaty took place between Shahu Maharaj Chhatrapati Satara kingdom and Sambhaji Maharaj Chhatrapati Kolhapur kingdom on Shake 1653 Virodhkrutnaam Sanvchhare Fasli San 1141 Rajyabhishek Shake 58."⁹⁶ It means the treaty took place on 13 April 1731. The treaty is known as the Treaty of Warna, for that river Warna was made the boundary line between two kingdoms. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj informed about the conditions in the treaty in writing.

There were nine articles in the treaty. "The territory to the south of this river and stretching right up to the bank of the Tungbhadra was assigned

to Sambhaji's independent sovereignty in all essential, but subordinate to Shahu as far as his foreign relations and safety were concerned. It was also stipulated that the southern district beyond the Tungbhadra right up to Rameshwar should be supposed common for joint endeavor.”⁹⁷

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had the highest qualities of compassion, kindness, forgiveness, peace and affection. It can be seen through the conditions in the Treaty of Warna. There are many examples in the history that many wars took place among the brothers for the throne and many of them lost their life also in the hands of their brother itself. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb was responsible for the death of his three brothers and he imprisoned his father for the throne. But Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj is a unique example in the history who returned the won territory to his cousin.

The eight conditions out of nine conditions are political conditions. Such types of treaties are always found in the history. But fifth condition proves that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was *Punyashlok* in the real sense. He mentioned that he himself would defeat anyone who is hostile to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Further he added that both of them would respect each other and grow the kingdom with one mind.

If Shahu Maharaj had decided, he would have conquered the kingdom of Kolhapur in a few moments and merged it into his empire. But instead of following the policy, he himself mentioned the condition of protecting the kingdom of Kolhapur, keeping in mind the aims and objectives of Hindavi Swaraj.

After the Treaty of Varana, Chhatrapati immediately started to implements the conditions as per the treaty. According to the condition

number six, the territory from Varana River to Tungbhadra River was given to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj wrote a letter to Bhagwantrao Amatya on 16 April 1731.

“The treaty took place between Swami and Chiranjeev Rajashri Sambhaji Raje. The places, forts, territories from Varana to Tungbhadra have been given to him. Gagangad fort has been given to Chiranjiv Rajashri. Therefore, the order letter should be received and the fort should be handed over.”⁹⁸

In the same way the Chhatrapati issued an order letter for Hindurao Ghorpade and ordered to handover the forts under his possession to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. “The territories and forts from Varana to Tungbhadra have been given. Therefore, the forts, you have, are given to Chiranjiv Rajashri. However, you will get the letters. To be hand over to him.”⁹⁹

4.1.8.9. Death of Peshwa Bajirao I

There was the army camp of Bajirao Peshwa at Sanbad, at the bank of Narmada River. There he suddenly got fever. He spent his twenty years as a Peshwa on the battlefields. He was depressed by the continuous exertion and family disputes. Chimaji Appa wrote in a letter on 7 March 1740 about the distracted mind of the Peshwa. “I did my utmost to console his distracted mind, but God, it seems, willed otherwise. I do not know what fate is in store for us.”¹⁰⁰ The letter shows the anxiety of Chimaji Appa about his brother.

Bajirao's fever was rising. The fever rose rapidly as he took bath in the cold water of Narmada River. "He died shortly after on the 28th April 1740 as he was returning to Hindustan."¹⁰¹

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had to face resentment of the courtesans while giving the robes of Peshwaship to Bajirao. But Bajirao didn't let the resentment to last forever with his efficiency. He showed his bravery on the battlefield and transformed the Maratha kingdom into a majestic empire. Bajirao spent twenty years of his career on the battlefield to prove Shahu's faith in him. R. V. Nadkarni says about him. "The twenty years of his rule were a period of ceaseless activity of wars and conquests."¹⁰² Sir Richard Temple says while praising him, "He died as he lived in camp under canvas among his men and he is remembered among the Marathas as the fighting Peshwa, as the incarnation of Hindu energy."¹⁰³

Bajirao's death was a big blow to the Maratha Empire. It created a big void in the politics and administration of Maratha Empire. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, while expressing his gratitude towards the Bhat family, appointed Bajirao's son as Peshwa considering the loyalty and bravery of Bajirao II. The Chhatrapati's role was not to encourage hereditary system for the office of Peshwa, but to express gratitude to the Bhat family and at the same time to encourage a mighty and capable person.

4.1.9. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao

After the untimely death of Bajirao Peshwa, the issue of office of the Peshwa arose in front of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. But he solved the problem diplomatically as usual. Balaji Bajirao and Bajirao, who were from the Bhat family, transformed the Swaraj into Samrajya, empire. So, naturally

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had a lot of faith in the Bhat family and every member in the family. That's why he did nothing wrong by appointing Bajirao as Peshwa after Balaji Vishwanath. Bajirao also did his best to prove the trust. After the demise of Bajirao, the Chhatrapati was recommended many persons for the office, but he felt that only Balaji Bajirao alias Nanasaheb, son of Bajirao I was capable and deserved the office.

“Balaji Bajirao Bhat was born on 16 December 1721 Wednesday (Plavnaam Samvatsar, Margshirsh Vadya 13 Sah 14, Shake 1643 at Saate village, near Vadgaon in Naane-Maaval)”¹⁰⁴ He was familiar with the Maratha administration before being appointed in the office of Peshwa. He had experienced the Maratha administration in his childhood too. He had been getting the lessons of politics since his childhood under the guidance of his father. “Nanasaheb spent his most of the early period in the court of Satara.”¹⁰⁵

4.1.9.1 Appointment of Balaji Bajirao as a Peshwa

It is said that history repeats itself. There are many incidents in the history that proves the statement. The appointment of Nanasaheb as Peshwa is such an example. Before twenty years, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had faced difficulties while appointing Bajirao as the Peshwa after Balaji Vishwanath. The same situation arose in front of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj in 1740 AD. The office of Peshwa was vacant due to the untimely death of Bajirao I. The Chhatrapati wanted a person for the office who would be brave, diplomatic, loyal, efficient and great warrior and politician like Bajirao. After Balaji Vishwanath, his son was appointed as Peshwa. In 1740,

again he decided to follow the same policy to appoint the son of Bajirao as Peshwa i.e. Balaji Bajirao.

It was not an easy task to appoint Balaji Bajirao as the Peshwa. At the time of Bajirao's appointment, some courtesans were against the decision taken by the king. In the same way at the time of appointment of Balaji Bajirao some courtesans opposed the appointment. "Raghuji Bhosale was the main rival of Balaji Bajirao."¹⁰⁶ Babuji Naik Baramatkar, Maharani Tarabai also opposed the appointment. Shripatrao Pratinidhi opposed him on the point that office of the Peshwa should not be offered always to Kokanasth Bhat family. Babuji Naik Baramatkar was a wealthy moneylender. Peshwa and Chhatrapatis too were under his debt. So, it was his strong desire to be the Peshwa.

No sooner did Babuji Naik and Raghuji Bhosale get the news of Bajirao's death than they arrived at satara to visit Chhatrapati. Raghoji Bhosale tried a lot to convince the Chhatrapati to appoint Babuji Naik as the Peshwa. But the Chhatrapati had already faced such a situation and made his own decision. The Chhatrapati knew that Baramatkar was a rich and capable moneylender, but he was not a good and perfect politician and warrior. He didn't have the qualities of a diplomatic Peshwa. So, he ignored the requests of both. Maharani Tarabai was familiar with the diplomatic nature of Balaji Bajirao. So, she thought that if he became Peshwa, it would affect her ambitions to enjoy the power in the future. Therefore, she opposed Balaji Bajirao to be appointed as Peshwa.

Once again Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had to appoint eligible person as Peshwa without being influenced by anyone's advice. He knew it very

well if the office of Peshwa remained vacant for a long time, it would affect the political and administrative stability of the empire. Therefore, he decided to appoint Balaji Bajirao as the Peshwa ignoring the objection of sardars. With this appointment, he firmly proved that Chhatrapati was only central focal chief or supremo of the Maratha Empire. The Chhatrapati's decision was the final decision. This also defines the strong and diplomatic role of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.

“Rajashri Balaji Bajirao Pandit was appointed as Peshwa on Chh. 11 Rabilakhar Su. Ihed Abain Shake 67 Raudranam Swamwatsare Ashadh Shuddh 11 Soumyawasar at Shahunagar, Satara. Paadshahi Hon 13000.”¹⁰⁷ “On second day Jyeshtha Vadya 12 Wednesday ten Ghatika, Balajo Bajirao got the robes of Peshwaship.”¹⁰⁸ It means on Wednesday 25 June 1740 Nanasaheb alias Balaji Bajirao became the third Peshwa from the Bhat family. He was offered 1 Mandil, 1 Zagaa Jamewar Motechur, 1 Chadar, 1 patka, 1 Ijaar, Total 5 as per the traditions.”¹⁰⁹

After getting the robes of Peshwaship, Balaji Bajirao introduced his stamp. The words were inscribed on that “राजा शाहू चरणगी दृढभाव बाळाजी बाजीराव”¹¹⁰ It means the faith of Balaji Bajirao lies at the feet of King Shahu Maharaj.

According to the administrative rule and former Peshwas, he also created his own seal. It was used for administrative and other correspondence. Following lines were inscribed on that seal:

“श्री राजा शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान

बाळाजी बाजीराव प्रधान” ¹¹¹

It meant that Balaji Bajirao was the minister (Peshwa) of the great human king Shahu. It was clear through the seal that Peshwa had accepted to work under the rule and command of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.

4.1.9.2. The Chhatrapati's Control over the Peshwa

There were always disputes used to take place between Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and Raghoji Bhosale Nagpurkar. Both of them considered themselves as each other's rivals. At such times, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had to balance the administration by mediating between the two and giving the right decision. He knew that it was not good for the Maratha administration, if anyone was hurt.

A similar dispute arose between them over the issue of Chauthai of Bengal. The Peshwa demanded the rights of Chauthai in Agra, Alahabad, Patna and Bengal to the Mughal emperor. "At that time Muhammad Roshan Akhtar Bahadur was the Mughal Emperor."¹¹² Bengal was under the authority of Raghoji Bhosale. The Mughal Emperor and Alvardikhan, Nawab of Bengal opposed the dominance of Raghoji Bhosale. Therefore, they expressed their wish in front of Bajirao to end the dominance of Raghoji in Bengal. So, it caused the dispute between the Peshwa and Raghoji Bhosale. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj called both of them to Satara in 1743. He gave his decision, "Varhad, Lucknow, Patna, Bihar and Bengal are under the authority of Raghoji, so Peshwa should not interfere in these regions."¹¹³

Raghoji Bhosale used to oppose Balaji Bajirao since his appointment. So, it had caused disagreement between them. But the Chhatrapati always mediated between them and gave the right decision. He strictly warned to Peshwa not to interfere in the allotted territories of Raghoji Bhosale. Though

the Peshwa was an important official compared to Raghoji Bhosale, he gave his decision in the favour of the right person and not the administratively important person.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj always kept watch on his sardars and ministers. He, from time to time, appreciated and supported Bajirao and sometimes he made him understand in harsh words whenever he was wrong. He followed the same policy in the case of Balaji Bajirao. He had to face resentments of the courtesans while appointing Balaji Bajirao as Peshwa. He always made sure that the choice he made was the right one. The head quarter of the Peshwa was at Poona. So, the Chhatrapati got minute information about the conduct and duties of the Peshwa, who was far away from Satara.

It can be confirmed by a letter written by Purandare to Nanasaheb Peshwa in 1747 AD. Bhivaji Lodha and Seti Mulik were sent to Poona by the Chhatrapati to get the information about the conduct of the Peshwa. Both of them were a lot of trustworthy of the king. They were sent to Poona to observe the administration of the Peshwa as well as to inquire about his health. Purandare wrote to the Peshwa, “You should also talk to them, be satisfied, so, both of them will explain all the details before Rajashri (the Chhatrapati) and Baai (wife of Shahu Maharaj) and they will realize it is right.”¹¹⁴

The role of Shahu Maharaj was suitable for the post of Chhatrapati. It is very necessary for the smooth functioning of the administration to keep a watch on the ministers and to get information about his conduct from time to

time and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj followed the policy throughout his reign.

4.1.9.3. Reappointment of Balaji Bajirao

Raghoji Bhosale and Babuji Naik Baramatkar always opposed Balaji Bajirao. Initially, Balaji Bajirao should not get the Peshwaship, so they tried many ways. But they didn't get success in their false attempts. After the appointment also they began to conspire against Balaji Bajirao to remove him from the office. They told the wrong news to the Chhatrapati about the Peshwa. Babuji Naik Baramatkar used to lend money to the Peshwa. Balaji Bajirao always delayed to return the borrowed money. The Chhatrapati was given the wrong information about the Peshwa that he borrowed money not for the sake of the state, but for himself. He borrowed money for his personal luxurious life, celebration of the family program. It was told many times to the king, so he also believed in the news and he removed Balaji Bajirao from the office of Peshwa.

Within a few days, the Chhatrapati realized that no one was capable for the office of Peshwa except Balaji Bajirao. "So, once again he appointed Balaji Bajirao as Peshwa and shut the mouth of opponents."¹¹⁵ Not only that, he gave the responsibility of Karnataka to him where Babuji Naik was the Subhedar.

The Chhatrapati's strong role can be seen through the incident. Throughout the history he has been described as the moderate, temperate, coordinating king, but the other side of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also needs to bring forward through the research and writing in history.

4.1.9.4. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's Two Important Administrative Decisions (Two Yaadis)

There are a lot of letters, order letters, vatan letters, diaries etc. available of the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, but among these, two documents are a lot of importance which became a turning point in the administration and history of the Maratha Empire. These two documents are the two *yaddis* which were addressed to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The Peshwa became the chief of the Maratha Confederacy.

“यादी क्रमांक 1

ओळ

1 श्री

2 राजमान रा बाळाजी प्रधान

3 पडित यास आज्ञा तुम्ही फौ

4 ज धरने सरवास आज्ञा केली

5 त्याच्या दैव नाही महारा

6 जास दुखणे जाले नाही बर हात

7 नाही राजभार चाला पाहिजे

8 तर पुढे वस बसवने कोलापूर

9 चे न करणे चिटणीसास सर

- 10 व सांगितले तसे करने वस
- 11 होईल त्याच्या आज्ञे
- 12 त चालून राजमंडळ चालव
- 13 ने चिटनीस स्वामीचे इस
- 14 वासू त्याच्या तुमच्या
- 15 विचारे राज राखने वस होई
- 16 ल तो तुमची घालमल करना नाई
- 17 सुदन आसा”¹¹⁶

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj might have written the ‘*yaadi*’ on about 1 October 1749 during Navrathra or Dashhara.”¹¹⁷ He had written before some days of his death. The first ‘*yaadi*’ has a lot importance in terms of study of history of the Marathas. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had a lot of faith in the three Peshwas from the Bhat family. Those three proved Chhatrapati’s faith. All of these transferred the Maratha kingdom into an Empire. A comparison with the Kolhapur kingdom reveals that the Marathas dominated almost the whole of India because of the throne of Satara. It happened only because of the strong leadership of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and prowess of first three Peshwas from the Bhat family. That’s why Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj always showed his love and trust in the Peshwas.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was restless during his last days due to the inheritance issue. The inheritance issue arose as he didn’t have son. When he fell ill in 1749, his anxiety increased about the inheritance issue. He had been ruling and managing affairs of Maratha Empire for forty-two years.

The Maratha Empire was extended up to North India and South India from Satara. He decided to appoint Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur as his successor, but he had noticed that Chhatrapati was not capable to handle the huge expanded Maratha Empire, so he gave up the idea.

The only thought bothering Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was who would be able to manage affairs of such a large empire. Finally, like many and timely decisions, he made a decision that there was only one person who could properly manage the affairs of the vast empire and that was Peshwa Balaji Bajirao Bhat. He had very cleverly chosen the three Peshwas and the selection was very appropriate that it resulted into the new era in the history of the Marathas. But there was a lot of difference between the earlier selections and selection in the year of 1749 AD. The earlier appointments were for the administrative office of Peshwa, but now he wanted to appoint a person to manage overall administration of the Maratha Empire. Finally, he took the decision to hand over the administration of the Maratha Confederacy to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and gave it in written.

The above '*yaadi*' reveals all the deliberations. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered that he didn't want to inherit heir of Kolapur i.e. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj for the throne of Satara. The heir of Kolhapur should not be inherited for the throne of Satara, to be in charge of the Confederacy by obeying the one who would inherit. The Peshwa had given the right to appoint the heir to the throne of Satara. But an important thing was that though the Peshwa had been given all the rights to manage the affairs of the Maratha Confederacy, he was obliged to run the administration at the behest of heir of Satara throne i.e. Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati knew that no one but only Balaji Bajirao was capable. At the same time, he didn't want to downplay the importance of the throne of Chhatrapati, so he ordered that the Peshwa must carry the responsibility at the behest of the future Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered the same in his second 'yaadi'. He said,

ओळ

- 1 राजमान रा बाळाजी पंडित प्रधान
- 2 आज्ञा जे राजभार तुम्ही चालवा
- 3 ल हा भरवसा स्वामीस आहे पहि
- 4 ले सांगितले खातरजमा ती चिटनी
- 6 सानी आढल कली तुमचे मस्तकी
- 7 हत टविला आहे तस वस होईल ते
- 8 तुमचे पद प्रधान चालवील करी
- 9 ल आतर तास स पत आसे त्याचे
- 10 आज्ञेत चालून सेवा करने राज
- 11 राखने बहूत काय लिहिने सुदन
- 12 आसा ¹¹⁸

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had cleared in line no nine and ten. The Peshwa must serve the empire by obeying the heir who would inherit the

throne. The word '*seva*' is important in the '*yaadis*'. He wanted to say that the Peshwa should serve the Chhatrapati and Maratha Empire by obeying the Chhatrapati. The two '*yaadis*' were the charters of the Maratha Confederacy which were given to the Peshwa. Though he had given the charter of Maratha Confederacy to the Peshwa, he had taken care that the Chhatrapati would be supreme. That is, he took complete care that the Chhatrapati would be primary and the Peshwa would be secondary. As the charioteer drives the chariot but he follows the orders of the master who is sitting in the chariot. It means it is must for the charioteer to follow the orders of his master. In the same way Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered the Peshwa to drive the chariot of the Maratha Confederacy, but he must obey the orders of his master i.e. Chhatrapati.

The above two '*yaadis*' reveal the role of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj in the administration of the Peshwa. The high-level farsightedness can be seen through the two '*yaadis*'. It is, sometimes, easy for a king to extend the empire in his lifetime, but it is very difficult to plan for the development and expansion of that empire after his death. But he his planning and the arrangement was '*na bhuto na bhavishyati*', it meant that it didn't happen in the past and would not happen in the future. The Peshwa would exercise the power. The arrangement, by him, was in such a way that the administration would be run by the Peshwa, but at the same time the importance of Chhatrapati would not diminish. He was well aware that it was not sure whether the successor of the Satara throne would be efficient, capable, powerful or not. If he was capable, it would be definitely good for the growth of the Maratha Empire; but if the successor was found weak, it would be dangerous for the stability of the Empire. Therefore, it would not

be wrong to hand over the power to a competent Peshwa, who was well-known for his feats, and even if the successor was weak, the importance of the Chhatrapati would not be diminished if the Peshwa managed the affairs of the Confederacy under the command of the Chhatrapati.

Such a type of unique arrangement was done by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He was a foresighted king so, “On Shake 1671 Shukl Naam Samvchhare Fasali San 1159 Rajyabhishek Shake 76 Meeti Margshirsh Vadya 3 Tritiya Day Thursday month of Jilhej Khaana Chh. 17, Shahu Maharaj Chhatrapati, at the time of his last days, ordered to Balaji Bajirao Peshwa that I have conferred the *agrahars* and donations to religious Brahmins, I have conferred the *Jahagirs* and villages and lands etc. to the relatives and brothers in the gotra as *inaam* and donation so you should carry all these after me.”¹¹⁹

Through the two yaadis and the above orders, the foresightedness, administrative skills and political diplomacy of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj can be seen. There would be very rare examples of such a type of arrangement in the political history. He proved that he was a great administrator in the real sense.

4.1.9.4. Death of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Evaluation

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had been facing health issue since 1743 AD. His health was not supporting and he was mentally disturbed. The reason behind it was the issue of succession. He was very much restless as he didn't have son to succeed the throne of Satara. His health issue became serious after 1747 AD. He didn't want to stay in the palace. So, he used to travel different places in the empire. “In Shake 1671 Shuklnaam Samwatsare

San Khamsen Mayaa v Alaf Margshirsh Vadya Trutiya Friday, he passed away.”¹²⁰ “(Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj) died on 15 December 1749 in the morning.”¹²¹

It is, always, not necessary for a king to go on expeditions, to fight on the battle field and for that he must have knowledge of war skills and strategy on the battle field. Without having skills of battle and without going on expeditions, a person can create a vast empire only with a good leadership and excellent administrative knowledge. The reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj is the best example of the deliberation.

The first three Peshwas from the Bhat family were loyal and fully devoted in the service of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The precious gift by Balaji Vishwanath for the Chhatrapati was the release of Maharani Yesubai from the captivity of the Mughal. Peshwa Bajirao I didn't face a single defeat on the battle field in his entire career, so it was a kind of service of Chhatrapati. He extended the empire from North India to South India and transformed the Swaraj into an empire. He created the influence of the Marathas over the politics of the entire India. Though the bravery of Bajirao worked for it, the strong administrative leadership and diplomacy of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was responsible for it. Nanasaheb Peshwa showed a great respect to the Chhatrapati in his lifetime as well as after his death too. “Nanasaheb Peshwa built one more temple on Parvati and installed the *paadukas* of Shahu Maharaj in it with full devotion.”¹²²

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had been blessed with the power of discernment of persons and farsightedness. Because of this gift only he appointed Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao Balaji and Balaji Bajirao as the

Peshwa. Even though Bajirao I was of mere twenty years, when he received the robes of Peshwaship, he detected the bravery and ability in Bajirao I and appointed him in the office of Peshwa. After Bajirao I, he recognized the high level of diplomacy in Balaji Bajirao and appointed the third person in the office of Peshwa from the Bhat family. “Shahu Maharaj was very happy with the accomplishment of the Peshwas and he gave permission to use the *jaripatkaa*, a flag, which was the symbol of pride of the Marathas.”¹²³ was a kind of flag in the Maratha Empire. It was introduced by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Only Peshwa, Pratinidhi and Senapati were given the right to use it. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj made changes in the rule and allowed only Peshwa to use.

In short, the role of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj during the three Peshwas was like an outstanding director. An outstanding director is always behind the stage and never presents himself on it, but he always directs the characters to perform their role nicely. The success of the play or drama depends on the direction. In the same way, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn't fight any war, but always guided, motivated, inspired and supported the Peshwas for the growth of the Maratha Empire and Maratha influence over the politics of India.

4.2

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and the Administration (1749 AD to 1777 AD)

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn't have heir, so it led to inheritance issue. He decided to adopt a boy from Bhosale clan as an heir of Maratha Empire. It was a big question in front of Chhatrapati that whom to adopt. Maharani Tarabai, aunt of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, visited him and suggested that why should he adopt someone else's son when he has a descendant in his own family? He suggested that Chhatrapati should adopt Ramraja, the grandson of Tarabai and son of Chhatrapati Shivaji II of Kolhapur.

There is very interesting fact behind the birth and upbringing of grandson of Tarabai. She told the story to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. "Shivaji, my son, had three daughters. He died while Bhavanibai (wife of Shivaji II) was pregnant. She gave birth to a baby boy three months later. There was a fear of perversion. So, the child was sent from the fort on the pretext that he was dead. Now the boy has grown up. He should be brought. No one else should be taken."¹²⁴

Tarabai suspected that Rajasbai would kill her grandson for the power. Rajasbai was the second wife of Chhatrapati Rajaram. Tarabai sent the child secretly and handed over to Daryabai Naik Nimbalkar at Pangaon near Vairag. Daryabai was the daughter of Shivaji II and granddaughter of Tarabai. The date of birth of Ramraja is not available. "Father (of Ramraja i.e. Shivaji II) died of smallpox in the March-April of 1726."¹²⁵ According

to Tarabai Ramraja was born after three months of the death of Shivaji II. Probably Ramraja might have been born in June –July 1726.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj didn't believe immediately in Tarabai's words that Ramraja belonged to Bhosale clan. Bajirao Amatya was the witness of all these incidents. The Chhatrapati put one condition on Tarabai that Bajirao Amatya should take an oath of water of Krishna River and tell that the narration by Tarabai was true. Bajirao Amatya took oath of water of Krishna River in front of Jagjivan Parashram Pratinidhi and said that the story narrated by Tarabai was true. Then the Chhatrapati trusted the fact. The then Viceroy of Goa wrote a letter on 23 March 1750 to the secretary of the king of Portuguese. He wrote in the letter, "Bajirao Amatya ensured Chhatrapati Shahu that Ramraja is the grandson of Tarabai. Sambhaji of Kolhapur will kill him (Ramraja) too, so Tarabai handed over the child to me. I took him to his aunt (Sister) Nimbalkar (Daryabai) of Pandav (Pangaon) country (kingdom)."¹²⁶

"Tarabai gave her husband's name Rajaram to her grandson, but she didn't utter the name of her husband, so she called him as Ramraja by making change in her husband's name"¹²⁷

4.2.1 Coronation of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj died on 15 December 1749. Next day Balaji Bajirao sent Khanderao Chitnis, Mahadoba Purandare, Chinto Vinayak, Lingoji Anant and Indroji Kadam to Pangaon to bring Ramraja to Satara. Ramraja arrived at Satara and the sardars started the preparations for coronation ceremony. "The day of Paush Shuddha Ashtami Shake 1671 was

decided as the Muhurat of Coronation.”¹²⁸ “On 4 January 1750 Ramraja entered in the city and coronation ceremony took place on the same day”¹²⁹

The Maratha Empire got its sixth Chhatrapati in the form of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. It was the beginning of the new chapter in Peshwai.

4.2.2 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao

4.2.2.1 Peshwa's conduct Towards the Chhatrapati

Ramraja became Chhatrapati and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao's respect for Chhatrapati gradually began to wane. As per the wish of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj the Peshwa had become the chief of Maratha confederacy and he had to work for Maratha Empire under Chhatrapati's command, but the Peshwa sometimes seems to forget the second wish. Even sometime the Peshwa didn't think that it was necessary to take permission of Chhatrapati before leaving for Poona from Satara. Such things disappointed the Chhatrapati. Though he was a Chhatrapati, he could not speak such matters directly to Peshwa. He spoke to Raghoji Bhosale. Vyankatrao Moreshwar was the Mutalik of Peshwa at the court of Satara. He informed to the Peshwa through a letter on 21 April 1750. He wrote that the Chhatrapati expressed his grief to Raghoji Bhosale. Vyankatrao further wrote about Chhatrapati's resentment, “Peshwa should be informed that it is not fair to leave without asking me.”¹³⁰

It was a humiliation to the throne by Peshwa as he left without the permission of Chhatrapati or asking him. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was very

ambitious and a practical person. He didn't think it was important to get Chhatrapati's permission. The changing role of the Peshwa began to diminish the importance of the Chhatrapati in the administration. The administration began to revolve around the Peshwa instead of revolving around Chhatrapati. This incident started the devaluation of the Chhatrapati in the administration. It was the tragedy in the Maratha administration. In fact the Peshwa was the representative of the Chhatrapati and as per that, the Peshwa was supposed to be in charge of the state and administration under the command of Chhatrapati, as promised to Shahu. Like Balaji Vishwanath and Bajirao I, Peshwa Balaji Bajirao did not remain loyal and didn't show his devotion to Chhatrapati and central power during the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. In the real sense, it was the coronation of Ramraja as a Chhatrapati and at the same time it was the indirect coronation of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao as the supreme of the Maratha Empire. It was the beginning of the helpless journey of the Chhatrapatis in the Maratha Empire.

4.2.2.2 Political Relations between the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa

A letter, which was written in June 1750, explains the role of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and their political relations with each other. Sinhagad had a lot of political importance as it was near Poona, where the Peshwa used to live, so Peshwa Balaji Bajirao wanted to bring the fort under his control. An agreement was sanctioned by Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj to handover the fort to Peshwa. The charter was also prepared, but there was a delay to handover the agreement and charter to the Peshwa, so he became reluctant. Chhatrapati got the news of displeasure of the Peshwa. He informed the Peshwa that the agreement and

charter had been given to Sachiv Chimaji Pandit. The Mutalik of Peshwa wrote a letter to the Peshwa and informed about Chhatrapati's views about the charter and the Peshwa. He wrote, "Recently it is found out that you were upset because of the delay in handing over the fort. When the king makes an agreement with you, any changes will not usually happen."¹³¹

The Peshwa was reluctant as there was delay in handing over the fort. The Chhatrapati was convincing him. Why should a minister be reluctant, when there was delay from king's side? Though a servant is unhappy, why should a king console him? The king is sovereign. Here the Chhatrapati had all the power, but the minister openly showed his disappointment and Chhatrapati consoled him. It was not the duty of Chhatrapati. One more thing along with it was that the Peshwa was waiting for the charter of Sinhgad. He did not directly show his possession. It means that he had not forgotten till this moment to look after the Maratha confederacy under the Chhatrapati.

In the same letter one more sentence makes us think. "Take over the fort. The whole responsibility of the king is on you."¹³² This sentence has very deep meaning. What did Mutalik want to say through this sentence? The whole authority of Maratha confederacy was with the Peshwa. The Chhatrapati clearly knew that. He was taking care that the Peshwa should not be offended. These were the early days of Ramraja as a new king. He didn't have so much experience of the administration and he knew that the important person and minister in administration was the Peshwa. It means that hurting Peshwa was like creating problems in the administration. That is why the Mutalik said that the responsibility of Chhatrapati was on Peshwa. The whole reign or career was dependent upon Peshwa. The Peshwa was

experienced in the Maratha administration. On the other hand, Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was new in the administration. There is a proverb in Marathi that to eat sugar as an ant. It means that it is always good to enjoy the authority as a subordinate to protect our rights and to get the profit. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj followed the same policy in the beginning of his career; he had decided not to disappoint any sardar, Pradhan or any other officials. G. S. Sardesai writes, “In the first fortnights- month, Chhatrapati realized that the Peshwa was capable for running the administration. There will be no benefit with Tarabai, so started to act as per Peshwa’s wish.”¹³³ This shows how much Peshwa was dominating the Chhatrapati. The changing political situation and some of Chhatrapati’s limitations also contributed to the declining importance of Chhatrapati in the administration.

In a letter, which was written on 19 June 1750 to Tarabai, Chhatrapati told that the fort had been handed over to the Peshwa. “The fort should be handed over to Pandit (Balaji Bajirao), so the letters of orders have been given to Rajashri Pantsachiv and killedar.”¹³⁴ The letter proves that the king handed over the fort to Peshwa, but one more letter proves that the Chhatrapati didn’t want to handover the fort to the Peshwa. He did only because of the circumstances in the administration. He took the decision against his own will. The Mutalik wrote to the Peshwa on 18 June 1750. “The king handed over the fort against his will as the whole administration would collapse; there was a pressure from all side.”¹³⁵

4.2.2.3 The Chatrapati’s Dilemma

As a Chhatrapati, Ramraja Maharaj didn’t want to act as per the wish of Peshwa. He had just been crowned. There was the pressure of courtesans

also. He thought that at this time to disappoint anyone would not be in the favor of the administration, so immediately he made up his mind to act as per the wish of the Peshwa. There was the dilemma for Chhatrapati in the case of Sinhgad. Sometime he used to say that he wanted to handover the fort to the Peshwa and sometime he opposed to his own decision. Vyankatrao Moreshwar, the Mutalik of Peshwa, informs to the Peshwa, “The king has dispatched two hundred men to Sinhagad and dispatched eight thousand rupees and wrote to Gadkari that the extra amount would be sent for expenses, but the fort should not be undertaken by him (Peshwa), otherwise all would be beheaded.”¹³⁶

Being a Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire, Ramraja Maharaj didn't like to act according to the ministers. So, he didn't want to handover the fort, but at the same time he was ready also, because he knew that without the support of the Peshwa he could not look after the administration. Finally, he handed over the Sinhagad fort to the Peshwa. The Sinhagad case proved that the Chhatrapati was not firm on his own decision.

4.2.2.4 Conferral of the Saranjams, Vatans etc.

Only Chhatrapati could confer the Saranjams, vatans, inams etc. upon sardars and others. The practice was continued till Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's reign. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj tried his best to continue the practice by him, but Peshwa Balaji Bajirao had started to control the powers of the Chhatrapati. Earlier Chhatrapati used to confer the Saranjams as per their will. There was no need to discuss with the ministers. During the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj the Peshwa controlled the practice of conferring the saranjams. “Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj wanted to confer

the saranjams upon Daryabai.”¹³⁷ He was waiting for legal letter by the Peshwa. He was not getting any response from the Peshwa. The Chhatrapati became angry and wrote, “Get Bayaa’s (Daryabai) new saranjam done first. If not, say so. I will go to Tuljapur along with Bayaa.”¹³⁸ It indicates that sometimes the Chhatrapati was helpless before the Peshwa. The power of conferring the title or any other reward was with Chhatrapati only. The Peshwa had started to interfere in the powers on the Chhatrapati. Ramraja Maharaj wanted to enjoy his powers, but the Chhatrapati had to retreat before the ambitious Peshwa.

4.2.2.5 Anger Against the Peshwa

The Chhatrapati, which was inside of Ramraja, was always motivating him to use his powers. Chhatrapati was the owner of Swaraj and he had to depend on the Peshwa, who was, in fact, a servant of the Chhatrapati, for every decision. Such things used to annoy him. Sometimes this anger would erupt and he would express his fierce feelings. He began to take the decisions regarding, appointment and dismissal of courtesans and sardars, conferring and cancellation of vatans etc. on his own. Purandare, the Mutalik of Peshwa, always informed the Peshwa about the behavior of the Chhatrapati. He wrote in a letter about the administration and anger of Chhatrapati. “He appoints new pawns; gives his own money, the old one is of no use to me. All will be removed. He says that he would keep only those who are faithful to him. He says to the persons, who are in the court since the reign of Shahu Maharaj that you are with Brahmins. You are useless for me. If you are mine, work here. He uses such languages for young to old, for chowkidaars too.”¹³⁹

The letter has a lot of importance regarding the career of Ramraja as a Chhatrapati, an Emperor of Maratha Empire. The letter shows the anger of the Chhatrapati against the Peshwa and his policies. It shows that the Chhatrapati didn't want the control of the Peshwa over his power. He used his power. He appointed new officials. The various kings used the same policy after their coronation. They removed officials who were loyal towards previous king. He suspected that the sardars, who were in the court of Shahu Maharaj, were loyal to the Peshwa. Why not? The Peshwa, who could control the Chhatrapati, could control the ordinary sardars easily. They were just like puppets for him. That is why Chhatrapati Ramraja appointed new people in the court. He warned the old courtesans that if they were loyal to Chhatrapati and not to the Peshwa, stay in the court. He made a vigorous effort to run the administration.

4.2.2.6 Struggle to Run the Administration

Despite the Peshwa he decided to run the government himself. The Mutalik of Peshwa informed him and requested him to be alert. "Daryabai did the politics in Satara by taking help of hawaldars. They will arrange troop of thousand – two thousand. The king and his army will govern over all with aggression. But the control will go out of Swami's (Peshwa) hand. Only if the Swami uproots the tree, the control of this state will remain in the hands of the Swami,"¹⁴⁰

The letter by Purandare gives a lot of information about the political situation in Satara, role of the Chhatrapati and policies of the Peshwa. The Chhatrapati didn't want to work as per the will of the Peshwa. He made the new appointments in the court, ordered to the sardars to remain loyal to the

Chhatrapati. He also ordered them to stay in the court, if they were not of the Peshwa, otherwise they should leave. More than that, he started mobilizing the troops. He got the help of his sister Daryabai in all these activities. Daryabai Nimbalkar was one of the powerful and influential women in the history of Marathas. The Kshatriya attitude in Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was making him uneasy. His confidence was increasing as Daryabai was accompanying him. He wanted to get the administration in his hands at any cost. So much so that he was ready to wage war against the Peshwa if the time came. Purandare was afraid of this. It was natural for that to happen. Why would any king want to act as per the will of his minister? One more important thing is in the letter of Purandare that he said that the Peshwa would lose his control over the administration. It meant that the Peshwa would be as other sardars or ministers in the Maratha confederacy. The Peshwa didn't want such a position. The Peshwa had tried to make Ramraja the Chhatrapati so that he could run the administration by controlling inexperienced Chhatrapati. This shows the cunning and political diplomacy of the Peshwa.

4.2.2.7 Relocation of the Capital: Peshwa's Diplomacy

An important decision was taken in the administration after the coronation of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. The Peshwa became the chief of Maratha confederacy as per the will of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. So the Peshwa was free to take administrative decisions. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was taking decision perceptively. Two ceremonies were organized at Shaniwar Wada in Pune. These two were the thread ceremony of Vishwasrao and wedding of Sadashivrao. He gave the invitation to Chhatrapati, Maharani Tarabai, Raghoji Bhosale, Sirlashkar Somwanshi, Shinde, Holkar etc. and

many more Maratha chiefs in Maratha confederacy for the ceremonies. His main intention was that he wanted to discuss the political and administrative condition in the Maratha Empire. That gathering was a kind of Maratha conference. It was a summit of prominent, powerful and successful sardars. The Chhatrapati, Maharani Tarabai and all the sardars arrived in Pune as invited. The Maratha kingdom had transformed into the huge empire. The whole responsibility of the empire was on the Peshwa. “So the Peshwa kept one proposal in front of the all Maratha chiefs. After many days of discussion, The Peshwa made a decision.”¹⁴¹

1. The political situation of Satara had become very uneasy for the administration. So, the official work and administration of the state be concentrated at Poona under the direct supervision of Peshwa. Chhatrapati and Tarabai should have their residence at Satara.
2. The Peshwa should have final and last authority of the administration. The Pratinidhi, the Sachiv and the Senapati were the only members of Ashtapradhan and have some administrative functions.

Some other decisions were also taken by the Peshwa.

Most important decision in the conference was that the capital of the Maratha Empire had been shifted from Satara to Pune. So, the Poona became the de facto capital of Marathas. Since 1707 AD, the coronation of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Satara was the political center of the Marathas. But, it had become the nominal center and Poona as the real center. D. B. Parasnis says, “While retaining Ramraja as his nominal sovereign, he assumed the entire administration of the kingdom himself and moved the capital from Satara to Poona.”¹⁴² This decision was the turning point in the

administration of the Maratha Empire. The definition of the term ‘Capital’ means where there is a king, there is a capital. Delhi was the capital. Initially Mughal Emperor Akbar’s capital was Agra. “He shifted his capital from Agra to this city, which came to be called Fatehpur Sikri.”¹⁴³ Later he shifted his capital to Lahore for some years. It indicates that where the king lives, that is the capital. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao initiated a new tradition in the administration that where there is Pradhan, Vajir, Prime Minister; there is the capital.

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was very ambitious, farsighted and practical person. He wanted the success at any cost, for that he was taking important decisions. The decision of shifting capital was taken very carefully by him. He kept the proposal of shifting capital, but at the same time he said that the Chhatrapati and Tarabai would stay at Satara. He could have requested them to stay at Poona, he could have prepared resident in Poona itself. His main intension was to keep away the Chhatrapati and specially Tarabai from the administration. He knew the nature of ambitious Tarabai. She could not live without power for a long time. There were chances to interference by Tarabai in the administration. So, he kept the proposal that the resident of Chhatrapati and Tarabai would be at Satara.

The resident of the king i.e. Chhatrapati would be at Satara and the overall the administration would be run from Poona; the decision was taken in the Poona conference. Poona became the center of Maratha administration and Satara became the mere residence of the Chhatrapati. To take decision to shift the capital from Satara to Poona and to take acceptance of the Maratha chiefs in front Chhatrapati was the peak of the diplomacy of the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao.

4.2.2.8 Maharani Tarabai's Political Maneuver and Chhatrapati

The age limit never interferes with the lust for power and politics. It can be seen through the Tarabai's craving for power after the age of 70 years too. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj's grandmother Maharani Tarabai was very ambitious, shrewd and intelligent lady. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor, who had established his power all over India, had become helpless due to the great leadership of Maharani Tarabai for seven years. She led the Maratha freedom struggle to completion with her mighty leadership. He died in Maharashtra itself, but Tarabai didn't let him to get success. It was not difficult for such a brave Tarabai to easily control others.

Maharani Tarabai was far away from the politics for many years. She once again developed the lust for the power after the coronation of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. She was getting restless to be active in the politics. She was trying to make Chhatrapati a pawn in the Maratha administration and to take the whole power in her hands. For that she began to maneuver in different ways. The main intention behind that was she wanted to rule indirectly over the Maratha Empire in the name of her grandson.

Though Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was new in the administration and politics, he was intelligent, sharp and ambitious. He could understand that his grandmother wanted to control him for the power, but he knew very well that no one can look after the administration without Peshwa. So, he tried to neglect Maharani Tarabai. She thought that if the Chhatrapati was not in her control, no one would give importance to her. So, she was trying to use

different ways to control him, but those were useless. So, she went to Sinhagad near Pune. The sardars in the court requested the king to bring her to Satara. The Chhatrapati replied over it, “I will not go to bring to Aaisaheb (Tarabai). I will putrefy her foe whole year. What is her job here? The game is hers. I will not bring her. Even if she comes, she will be imprisoned.”¹⁴⁴

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was playing his move cautiously. He thought that there was no point in making vain pleas to Tarabai. It was the dangerous in the future. There would not be freedom in the administration after the coming of Tarabai to Satara. So, he thought that it would be better to keep her away from Satara.

It didn't take time for Tarabai to get the views of the Chhatrapati about her. She became furious after listening the words of her grandson for her. It was Tarabai who suggested Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj to adopt Ramraja, it was she who made Ramraja the Chhatrapati. So, it was natural for Tarabai to get angry. She decided to imprison the Chhatrapati. While the King was on the expedition of Sangola, she returned to Satara. The mountains of terrible ideas were forming in her head. She was going to do something that had never happened in the history of Marathas. A new chapter of a worst tragedy was to be written.

4.2.2.9 The Chhatrapati in the House Arrest

When the king returned from Sangola, Maharani Taarabai called him for a visit. She had made all the necessary arrangements in the fort. She had taken the Killedar, Chopdar into confidence. The Chhatrapati was going to visit Tarabai. When Chhatrapati became suspicious, he tried to turn back but he failed. The killedars, chopdar opposed him to escape from the castle.

“Seeing no solution, Maharaj went back to the palace (of Tarabai). Aaisaahab (Tarabai) arranged guards in the palace and appointed guards on the gate.”¹⁴⁵In this way, Tarabai subjugated the Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire and kept him in the house arrest in a palace.

The house arrest of the Chhatrapati was not an ordinary thing. It was a turning point in the history of Marathas. This conspiracy of Tarabai started devaluing the Chhatrapati and the central power. When a king takes decisions on his own, runs administration as per his own rules, he has control on his subject; then only there is respect among the people, ministers, army for the king as well as there is a lot importance to his words. When a king himself was imprisoned, how can people respect the king? There was a lot of respect and fear about the first six Mughal emperors all over India, because they had single-hand power. They were sovereign. The condition was not same after Aurangzeb. The Sayyid brothers dominated the Mughal court after 1707 AD. They were controlling and dominating the Mughal emperors, so there was neither respect nor fear about the Mughal rulers among the people and courtesans. The Sayyid brother's lust for the power was to the extent that they assassinated the Mughal ruler. “It seemed no longer safe to spare Farukhsiar; and that unfortunate shadow of a king was dragged from his hiding place in the seraglio and privately put to death.”¹⁴⁶

The condition of the Maratha emperor was like the later Mughal rulers. Tarabai kept the young king in the house arrest. It shows the weakness of the Chhatrapati. A seventy-five years old lady tried to show that the king is weak and she succeed too. Seeing that her grandson Ramraja was not ready to be under her control by keeping him in house arrest, Tarabai started

accusing him. He started his attempts to release from the house arrest of Tarabai. He corresponded secretly with Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. When Tarabai came to know the secret correspondence between the king and the Peshwa, she was scared and thought that she would be imprisoned if the Peshwa helped him. As a coin has two sides, in the same way there were two sides of the nature of Maharani Tarabai. She was brave, courageous, intelligent, a good leader; but on the other side she was very shrewd and cunning. She wanted the power by hook or crook.

Tarabai understood that it was not easy to control the king, so she used her last wicked trick and it was like a disastrous earthquake not only for Ramraja but for the whole Swaraj. She declared that Ramraja was not her grandson. He was not the son of her son Chhatrapati Shivaji II. He was not the heir of Bhosale dynasty. “‘You are not real, but mock. You are not from royal family, but a pilferer.’ She used such words again and again in front of the people in the palace. It spread among the subject gradually.”¹⁴⁷

Tarabai had created very shameful situation in front of the king, sardars, ministers and the subject. She humiliated the Chhatrapati by keeping him in the house arrest and by using such words for the king she raised the question on the existence of the Ramraja Maharaj. All were in dilemma that whether the king is real heir or a forged. She destroyed the respect for the Chhatrapati as well as Ramraja Maharaj from the heart of the people. The Peshwa era is the second period of the history of the Marathas. In the second phase or period after the death of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the Chhatrapatis lost their importance in the administration.

Two things are responsible for the situation. First one is the will of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and second one is the situation which was created by Tarabai for her desire to enjoy the power. According to the will of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the Peshwa became the head of Maratha confederacy, but they had to carry the administration under the command of the Chhatrapatis. Tarabai created the doubtful situation about the royal blood of Ramraja Maharaj. So, the Chhatrapati had already lost the chief position in the Maratha confederacy, due to Tarabai's conspiracy the respect for him was waning. She was to some extent responsible for downplaying the importance of Chhatrapati.

Barhanji Mohite, father-in-law of the king, was also worried due to the statement of Tarabai. It was natural for Barhanji to feel remorse as the same woman who swore and made Ramraja king said that the king is not from royal dynasty i.e. Bhosale clan. "We gave daughters to you and now saying that he is not the king. So, either kill all of us or kill the daughters."¹⁴⁸ Barhanji Mohite was not only the father-in-law of the king, but the representative of the all the subject in the Swaraj. What was going on in his mind was going on in the minds of the people. The king who was crowned was not from royal family as well as from Bhosale dynasty. It created the confusion among the sardars.

It was great shock for Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He was brought by Tarabai in Satara. Tarabai only gave new identity to Ramraja as a king, but it was herself who was saying that he was not his grandson. Dr. Jaisingrao Pawar says, "This was a bombshell not only on Ramraja but on the Maratha monarchy too."¹⁴⁹

4.2.2.10 Peshwa's Attempts to Release of the Chhatrapati

Finally, the Peshwa came to release the Chhatrapati. Umabai Dabhade had sent the troops of 15000 under the leadership of Damaji Gaikwad for the help of Tarabai. Umabai Dabhade was already opposing Bajirao and Balaji Bajirao. “Umabai, the widow of Khanderao Dabhade had, in spite of her pretended reconciliation with the Peshwa, never forgiven Bajirao or his son Balaji Bajirao for the defeat of Dabhai or the death of her eldest son, gallant Trimbakrao.”¹⁵⁰ Damaji Gaikwad defeated Trimbakrao Purandare, sardar of the Peshwa, at Nimb near Satara and visited Tarabai in Satara. Trimbakrao reorganized the army on the order of the Peshwa and defeated Damaji Gaikwad. The Peshwa also defeated the army of Tarabai at Satara and besieged the fort of Satara. He ordered Tarabai to free the king, but she refused to do so. The Peshwa left for Pune. Meanwhile, he imprisoned Damaji Gaikwad and the relatives of Umabai.

A group in Tarabai's army staged an unsuccessful revolt against her. She was in a fix due to the Peshwa's army in Satara, the revolt of her soldiers, imprisonment of Damaji Gaikwad and helplessness of Umabai Gaikwad. She understood that it was not easy to fight against the Peshwa for a long time, so she decided to reconcile with the Peshwa. “हुजूर मामल्याचा ऐवज शाहूचे कारकीर्दीप्रमाणे देउन एकनिष्ठेने सेवा करावी. उत्तर मागील पैका मुदतीने घ्यावा. साहेब खाली आल्यावर पूर्वीप्रमाणे चालेल.”¹⁵¹ A few other conditions were there along with these conditions. Under these conditions Tarabai came down from the fort with Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj.

Afterwards she came to Poona along with the Chhatrapati. Both of them were given the honor and respect by the Peshwa and his family. Tarabai,

who was ambitious, stubborn and had a strong desire for power, was not one of those who enjoyed a little success. She put one condition before the Peshwa that everything would work according to her without mentioning the Chhatrapati's name and she also would not be out of the will of the Peshwa. Ambitious Peshwa was waiting for that only. Whatever he wanted was happening instinctively. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and Maharani Tarabai met at Jejuri, where there is a temple of Lord Khandoba, which is considered as the deity of whole Maharashtra. "On the 14 September 1752 they swore that they would abide with their mutual promises."¹⁵² In that ceremony Tarabai also swore that "Ramraja was not her grandson, but a gondhali and a common imposter."¹⁵³

4.2.2.11 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj as a legal Heir of the Throne

Maharani Tarabai once again showed her shrewdness. She knew very well that without the support of Peshwa she could not use the power and at the same time she decided that she would enjoy the power by downplaying the importance of the Chhatrapati. So, she swore and said that Ramraja was not her grandson. It was Tarabai who created confusion among the sardars as Shahu was the imposter, when he returned in the Swaraj in 1707 AD. Ramraja was an ordinary person for her.

There are many evidences to prove that Ramraja was grandson of Tarabai and heir of Bhosale dynasty. The authentic proof is Daryabai Nimbalkar. She was the daughter of Chhatrapati Shivaji II of Kolhapur and granddaughter of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai. She had taken care of Ramraja since his childhood. He was bought up by his

sister Daryabai. If he was the son of a Gondhali, why would she take care of him? When she was taking leave of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj after some days of the coronation, her eyes were filled with tears and she said, “It is not that I don’t have wealth. Raja, I came here to make yours everything good, to guide you.”¹⁵⁴ One more important evidence is Bajirao Amatya, who was the witness of Ramraja’s journey from Kolhapur to Pangao immediately after his birth. He swore by the water of Krishna River and told that the information given by Tarabai about Ramraja was true. D. B. Parasnis Says, “It at one time suited the Peshwa’s policy to throw doubts on his legitimacy, though the evidence seems, on the whole, strong in favour of it.”¹⁵⁵ It means D. B. Parasnis also agreed that there were many evidences that can prove the legitimacy of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj as a royal heir of Bhosale dynasty.

Due to Tarabai’s lust for power in her old age, the position of Chhatrapati was fully humiliated. The Chhatrapati’s importance was greatly diminished. A person who develops a good thing, the same person can make it worse. The best example is Maharani Tarabai. She fought against powerful Aurangzeb and the Mughal army for seven years after the death of her husband. By securing the Maratha kingdom, Tarabai maintained the dignity, importance, honor, respect and monopoly of Chhatrapati. Tarabai was a very stubborn, ambitious woman, regarded as an expert woman in politics and administration. No one could have imagined that such political thoughts could come out of the brain of such a woman during the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. V. K. Rajwade says, “Eventhough Tarabai was about eighty (eighty-four in 1759 AD) years old, her stubbornness did not diminish.”¹⁵⁶

As earlier decided between Tarabai and the Peshwa, she would control the administration on the behalf of Chhatrapati. The Peshwa had promised her, but it was just superficial. The whole power had centralized in the hands of Peshwa. It was a kind of her failure. Maybe the destiny wanted the same. The political greed makes powerful people uneasy in old age, but every ruler should be aware of the age limit and changing political situation. This is exactly what the powerful and influential Tarabai did not get. According to V. K. Rajwade her political aspiration and ambitions persisted even in her old age, but the timing was wrong. So, Tarabai faded in her last political journey.

Maharani Tarabai Bhosale, who was Bhadrakali Bhavani for the enemy and witness of the reign of six Chhatrapatis i.e. from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, died on 9 December 1761 at the age of eighty-six in Satara.

4.2.2.12 The Role of Chhatrapati Ramraja about the Mughal Emperors

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had a lot of respect for the Mughal emperors. He always followed the theory of ‘Maratha kingdom in the Mughal Empire.’ He motivated other Marathas time to time to follow the theory. Similarly, Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj also continued this tradition. Ahamadshah Bahadur ¹⁵⁷ was the Mughal emperor between 1748 and 1754 AD. Bapu Pandit Hingne was the Resident of Peshwa in Delhi in 1751 AD. “Ramraja, in December 1751, presented through Khoja Jawedkhan a *nazar* of one hundred mohars, a golden key along with a letter expressing loyalty

and obedience to the Mughal Emperors.”¹⁵⁸ The nazar had been presented through Bapu Pandit Hingne on the behalf of Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Shahu showed the Maratha kingdom was the tributary of the Mughal Empire. In the same way, Chhatrapati Ramraja wanted to show the Maratha Empire was a kingdom which was the tributary of Mughals. It can be seen through the *nazars* presented by Chhatrapati. One important thing is that there was golden key in the nazar. The role of Chhatrapati shows that the Marathas wanted to show that the Maratha kingdom was the domain of the Mughals. There were a lot of changes which took place in the politics of India after the death of Aurangzeb and gradually the Deccan became the center of the political affairs of India due to the prowess of the Marathas. Due to the moderate nature and policy of Chhatrapati Shahu, though the Marathas were sovereign, they ruled all over India under the overlordship of Mughal. The same impact of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was on the other Chhatrapatis. The situation changed, but the Chhatrapatis were considering themselves as the tributary of the Mughals. This is evident from Chhatrapati's policy.

4.2.2.13 Death of Balaji Bajirao

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had appointed Balaji Bajirao as the Peshwa very carefully and thoughtfully. He handed over the whole responsibility of the Maratha confederacy to Balaji Bajirao. The Peshwa proved his efficiency, accomplishment and leadership. The Maratha Empire was at the peak. He was not only a good warrior but an excellent administrator too. He handled the matter of Ramraja and Tarabai successfully. Though Tarabai told that the Chhatrapati was not from the Bhosale dynasty, he looked after

the king by giving proper respect. The king was living in house arrest, but the situation was responsible for that.

The Marathas were defeated in the third battle of Panipat by Ahamadshah Abdali on 14 January 1761. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao had already left to help his warriors in Panipat. “It was at Bhilsa that on 24 January 1761 Peshwa Balaji Bajirao got the news of the Maratha defeat at Panipat.”¹⁵⁹ It was a huge shock for the Peshwa. He had not faced any kind of defeat in his entire career, but he was hurt due to the defeat at Panipat. There was dominance of the Marathas all over India, but it was a heavy loss and huge setback for the Marathas. He had lost his own son Vishwasrao in the battle. All these shocks broke his heart. “He got the command of God on Jyeshth Vadya six at Parvati of Poona.”¹⁶⁰ “He died on 23 June 1761.”¹⁶¹

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao followed the orders and will of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Tarabai tried her best to make Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur the king of throne of Satara, but the Peshwa didn't let her to get success as he had got the order from Chhatrapati Shahu that '*Kolhpurcha n karne*'. It was one of the wills of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj that Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur should not be made the King of Satara after his death as he did not have heir. The Peshwa respected the words of his master and never let Tarabai and Sambhaji Maharaj to get the throne of Satara. Commitment was one of the features of his qualities. Due to the courageous personality of Balaji Bajirao and the civil strife at Satara, the Peshwa became the master of the Maratha Empire unknowingly. It was not a revolution, but an evolution. Edward Warring says, “The usurpations of the Peshwas, in a country where empires fall and fresh states rise on the

ruin, neither attracted observations nor excited surprise. Indeed, the transaction was easy, natural and progressive.”¹⁶²

Due to the changing political situation, the Chhatrapati could not understand how all the reins of power passed from Chhatrapati to the Peshwa. The Peshwas became the de facto head of the Maratha Empire and the Chhatrapatis became the nominal head.

4.2.3 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Peshwa Madhavrao I

The office of the Peshwa was vacant due to the death of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had appointed Balaji Vishwanath as the Peshwa. After his death his son Bajirao I and after the death of Bajirao I his son Balaji Bajirao was appointed as the Peshwa. It means that an unwritten law came into existence to give the office of Peshwa to the hereditary. A new tradition had begun. So, according to the unwritten law and new tradition it was decided that the robes of Peshwaship should be given to Madhavrao Balaji Bhat, son of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. At the time of appointment of Bajirao I and Balaji Bajirao as the Peshwa there was resistance in the court of Satara. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was firm on his decision. There was no resistance at the time of the appointment of Madhavrao I, because the Peshwas had become the master of the Maratha state and it was the tradition to give the robes of Peshwaship in the Bhat family. If anyone wanted to resist the appointment, whom the resistance should be done before? The king was in the house arrest. So, according to the system, the Chhatrapati had to give the robes of Peshwaship to Madhavrao I.

“Madhavrao Ballal was given the robes of *huzur* (Peshwa) on Ashad Shuddh Panchami Shake 1683 Vrusha Naam Sanvatsre.”¹⁶³ “On 20th July (Madhavrao I) received the robes of office at the hands of the Chhatrapati.”¹⁶⁴

The Chhatrapati's work appears to have been limited only to give the robes of Peshwaship. Madhavrao I's age was mere sixteen, when he got the robes of Peshwaship. He didn't have the experience about the administration. Despite this, the Chhatrapati neither opposed nor expressed concern for the appointment. The Chhatrapati's authority was limited to give robes to the Peshwa.

The name of the Chhatrapati is found on the seal of the Peshwas. As per the system in the administration, Madhavrao I also used his seal for royal correspondence, documents. There was the name of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj before the name of the Peshwa.

“श्री राजाराम नरपति हर्षनिधान

माधवराव बल्लाळ मुख्य प्रधान”¹⁶⁵

Though the Peshwas were master of the Maratha administration, on the documents they were the attendant of the Chhatrapati.

4.2.3.1 Nature of Peshwa Madhavrao I

Peshwa Madhavrao I was also known as Shrimant Madhavrao Ballal. Though he was too young, he deserved the office due to the sharp wit, judgment of people, awareness of the situation, quick decision-making ability and farsightedness. Along with these features of his qualities, he was

short-tempered. “Gangoba Tatya Diwan, Nijbat Holkar replied rudely, so he injured the back of Gangoba with stick.”¹⁶⁶ He had inspired awe in the administration within a short period due to his sharp intellect and irascible nature.

4.2.3.2 Raghunathrao’s Dominance in the Administration

When Madhavrao I was appointed as Peshwa, he was sixteen years old. So, his uncle, Raghunathrao, was appointed as the Peshwa’s advisor. Raghunathrao was very ambitious and shrewd. He didn’t want to be mere an advisor. In fact, he wanted the whole power in his hands. The Peshwa understood the intention of his uncle, but he decided to keep mum in the beginning of his career. Raghunathrao was trying to show the Peshwa was weak to handle the office and he himself deserved the office. He was making changes in the administration as per his wish. He appointed some guards to keep a watch on the Peshwa. An important thing was that whatever happened in Satara with the Chhatrapati before ten years, same thing happened with the Peshwa in Poona. During 1750-52, Tarabai wanted to control the Chhatrapati and the administration. In the same way, Raghunathrao wanted to control the Peshwa and the administration.

Trimbakrao Pethe and Baburao Phadnis were removed from their posts, Sakharam Bapu was appointed as the chief Karbhari, Kanhoji Mohite was given the post of Sarlashkar, Nilkanth Aba Purandare was appointed as the Mutalik of the Peshwa etc. and many other changes were made by Raghunathrao. “He expressed his desire to get the sanction of these changes by the Chhatrapati of Satara.”¹⁶⁷ He went to Satara and got the consent of the Chhatrapati to the changes made by him.

Raghunathrao made the changes in the court of the Chhatrapati in Satara. “Raje Bahadar was appointed as Pratinidhi. Vitthal Shivdev was appointed as judge, Dabhade was removed from the office of Senapati and Ramchandra Jadhav was appointed in the office, Khanderao Darekar was appointed as Sarlashkar which was given to Nimbalkar by Balajipant Nana by removing Khanderao Dabhade.”¹⁶⁸ The Peshwas had become the chief of the Maratha confederacy according to the order of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, but during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and early days of Madhavarao Peshwa, the advisor of the Peshwa became the chief of the Maratha administration. The advisor used his power to some extent that he made changes in the court of Chhatrapati in Satara, Dabhade had been serving the Swaraj for many years, but Raghunathrao appointed Ramchandra Jadhav. The authorities of the Chhatrapatis were becoming only nominal. Such a situation had arisen that whether the Peshwa would also become a nominal head of the confederacy.

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj could not exercise his power as long as Tarabai was alive. He breathed a sigh of relief after Tarabai's death, but the freedom could not last for a long time. Raghunathrao was trying to establish his dominance and Madhavrao Peshwa was struggling to exercise his powers. The Chhatrapati was completely neglected due to the rivalry between nephew and uncle.

The Peshwa became successful in reducing the Raghunathrao's influence in the politics. He destroyed the Raghunathrao's dominance in politics with the help of clever politics and began to use his power as the Peshwa. He didn't let the Peshwa to become as the nominal head like the Chhatrapati. Raghunathrao himself accepted the strength of the Peshwa and

wrote to Gopikabai, Peshwa's mother. He said in the letter which was written on 14 August 1762, "Chiranjiv Raya (Madhavrao I) proved hard work and ability in the battle field. It was more than me. He had not experienced any war. He experienced the first battle. I am confident that he will prove his bravery further."¹⁶⁹

4.2.3.3 The Peshwa's Policy Towards the Chhatrapati

As every coin has two sides, the same way there were two sides of the nature of Peshwa Madhavrao I. He was short tempered minister, but on the other side he was very kind hearted, religious and pious person. He always used to be sad about the humiliation and restrictions cum imprisonment of the Chhatrapati. So, he took a decision to free the Chhatrapati. The Chhatrapati was living life like in captivity after the death of Tarabai. The Peshwa decided to crown Ramraja Maharaj again. "After the battle of Rakshasbhavan, Ramraja was formally crowned at Satara on 23 March 1763."¹⁷⁰

It was revolutionary decision taken by the Peshwa. He tried to give honour and respect to the king through the coronation. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was also crowned twice. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was the second Chhatrapati who was crowned twice. The happiness of the Chhatrapati was temporary. There was no change in the life of Ramraja Maharaj. Earlier he was in the control of Tarabai and after her death he was in the control of the Peshwa. Many restrictions were imposed on the king. The Peshwa had so much control on the authority of the king that "he had mortification of seeing his household controlled by an officer of the Peshwa."¹⁷¹ It shows that the king had to depend on Peshwa for minor things

in his court as well as his personal life. It was a kind of free captivity. He didn't have power even to appoint or dismiss the servants for his own service. There were a lot of restrictions on the expenditure of Chhatrapati. The expenditure in the stable of the king was also recorded minutely by the Peshwa. "Five khijmatgar were sent to fort Satara"¹⁷² for service with the Maharaj by Madhav rao I in 1767-68. The Chhatrapati neither had field for the vegetables nor the grassland for horses. There were restrictions on the expenses for the entertainment of the king. It was necessary to get approval for the expenses from the Peshwa. "An organic part of the state, he had not the ordinary right of an ordinary man of dismissing and appointing his servants."

It is clear from all these circumstances that an unwritten law came in to exist in the Maratha administration. The Peshwa would control the administration as a de facto ruler of the Maratha Empire and the Chhatrapati would be the nominal head. Along with that if the Peshwa was minor; another capable person would look after the administration on the behalf of the Peshwa. That person was also known as the Karbhari. In this way the whole administration began to move around the Peshwa.

4.2.3.4 The Chhatrapati and the New Appointments

Though the Chhatrapatis had no powers, but for the new appointments his official approval was necessary. In fact, the approval was only formality. Peshwa Madhavrao I followed the rule strictly. He got the approval for every appointments or changes. There are many examples. Hindurao Ghorpade was a Maratha sardar. He was a descendant of Santaji Ghorpade who was senapati during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Chhatrapati

Shivaji II. Peshwa Madhavrao called him for his help. Hindurao Ghorpade requested the Peshwa that he should be appointed as the Senapati as his ancestor was in the service of the Swaraj for a long period. The Peshwa agreed to the request. Raghunathrao had already given appointed Ramchandra Jadhav as Senapati. That time he was dominant in the administration. Now the Peshwa was supreme in the administration. So, he decided to appoint Hindurao as the Senapati. He didn't forget to get formal consent for the appointment. He wrote a letter to Chhatrapati. "He (Ghorpade) is former an incumbent and nowadays useful for the affairs of the administration. Therefore, the robes of the office should be given. So, the robes of the office have been sent. Ghorpade has been given the position with honour robes and a *mahaal* of six lakhs in Karnatak province has been assigned."¹⁷³

4.2.3.5 A Spurious letter by Peshwa to the Chhatrapati

A letter has been published in the book 'Satara Itihas Sanshodhak Mandalachi Aitihasik Lekhmala-2'. The date of the letter has not been given. The letter had been written to Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj by the Peshwa Madhavrao I. He had informed the account of a campaign. The Peshwa went as per the order of the Chhatrapati. Sujatdaulah was coming with his troops, so the Peshwa went to Jaipur and defeated the troops there. The Peshwa gave each and every detail. Some soldiers were injured and some died. The soldiers were awarded as per the performance in the battle. He didn't forget to praise the king. He wrote, "We succeeded by getting victory due the virtue and prowess of the Swami (king)."¹⁷⁴ As well as he wrote about the booty, elephants, horses, treasure and jewels.

Though the prowess of the Peshwa revealed through the letter, historian G. S. Sardesai says, “This is a spurious letter addressed apparently by the Peshwa to the Chhatrapati. Madhavrao did not go North India.”¹⁷⁵ The statement of Sardesai is thought provoking. According to him the Peshwa did not go to North India and he told lie to the Chhatrapati. It was necessary to give detail about the booty in the battle, but the Peshwa didn’t give the detail. He wrote, “A lot of booty was collected in the royal treasury. I will send the particular in your service.”¹⁷⁶ He didn’t send the details of the booty along with the letter. It means that he had not gone to North India.

The Chhatrapati had ordered him for the campaign, but the Peshwa did not obey it. He pretended only to show apparently. The Peshwa’s policies towards the orders of the Chhatrapatis were artificial.

4.2.3.6 The Peshwa’s Care for the Chhatrapati

The Peshwas were looking after the administration very carefully. Peshwa Madhavrao I also emerged as an excellent administrator. He was very angry person, but he was very kind hearted too. He took a lot of care of Chhatrapati. He was very concerned about king’s health. He inquired about the health of the Chhatrapati to Baburao Krishna, Mutalik of the Peshwa at Satara through a letter on 17 February 1768. Not only that, if his was not improving, he suggested remedies on his own He said, “If he didn’t feel well, he should come to the city and seek the treatment.”¹⁷⁷

On 23 February 1768, he wrote a letter to Baburao Krushna after few days late of the previous letter and ordered him to inform about the health of the king frequently. He wrote, “Rajashri Swami (the King) is not feeling well. Therefore, I got in detail, he came down (from the fort).So, write about

the health always.”¹⁷⁸ It shows that Peshwa Madhavrao I had a lot of respect and loyalty for the Chhatrapatis like earlier Peshwas, but only the fact was that the Peshwa didn't want the Chhatrapatis who would give commands to them in the administration. They wanted only the nominal kings.

Peshwa Madhavrao changed the condition of the Chhatrapati. Peshwa freed the king from the house arrest, but kept the all authorities with him. Even so, the Peshwa had a lot of respect, loyalty for the Chhatrapati. It was his wish that the king should be allowed to stay in Shahu Nagar in Satara city and give freedom for his own arrangement. The Peshwa had to spend a lot of time in the matter of Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao wanted to make the Chhatrapati to Janoji Bhosale of Nagpur, but he didn't get success. The Peshwa was directly or indirectly responsible for the failure of Raghunathrao in his conspiracy.

The Peshwa tried to provide all the services to the king. Though sometimes there was delay in the services, but he never disappointed the king. Whenever he went to Karnataka for campaign, he came to Satara and visited to the Chhatrapati. While returning to Poona also, he used to visit Chhatrapati. G. S. Sardesai says, “People praised Balaji Vishwanath, respected Bajirao, worshipped Balaji Bajirao, were scared of Madhavrao, uncle and mother were also scared of him.”¹⁷⁹ There was a lot of respect for the Peshwa in the heart of Chhatrapati and the subject. Even so, he was very kind to Chhatrapati.

The Peshwa was very much religious. Most of the time in Shanivar wada he used to spend in pooja. He spent a lot of money in donation and *dakshina*. There was one more reason behind the respect for the Chhatrapati.

A rumor was spread in the Swaraj about the Peshwa family after the battle of Panipat. “The Peshwas and their family betrayed the Chhatrapati and his family and that is why the disaster of Panipat took place.”¹⁸⁰ Peshwa Madhavrao I was very religious, so he thought there was truth in the rumor. The Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and his family were humiliated during the reign of his father Balaji Bajirao, so the battle of Panipat took place. In the battle, the Marathas had to face defeat and many people died. His elder brother Vishwasrao, cousin Sadishavrao died in the battle. The weak enemies of the Marathas emerged as strong enemy and created obstacles in the expansion.

The Peshwa took it very seriously. He thought the only way to recover the mistake was to give respect and honor to the Chhatrapati and his family. So, he looked after the Bhosale dynasty by providing services. The houses on the fort and the palace were dilapidated. The same condition was of the palaces of the queens. “When the Peshwa came to know he sent two thousand rupees to Ganesh Vitthal and ordered to repair all houses, palaces.”¹⁸¹

4.2.3.7 Death of Peshwa Madhavrao I

The Peshwa was infected with tuberculosis which started deteriorating his health. The disease had affected his intestine. There was no cure for tuberculosis in those times. He decided to spend his last days at his devotional place. He spent his last days in the premises of Chintamani temple at Theur near Pune. He died on 18 November 1772.

4.2.4 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Peshwa Narayanro

Peshwa Madhavrao didn't have son, so it was decided to give the robes of Peshwaship to the third son of Balaji Bajirao and younger brother of Madhavrao I, Narayanrao Balaji. As per the tradition in the administration, Narayanrao went to Satara. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj gave him the robes of Peshwaship. "Narayanrao Ballal was made the Peshwa after the death of Madhavrao in the month of Margasirsha in the year 1772."¹⁸² The new Peshwa made his seal.

“श्री राजाराम नरपति हर्षनिधान

नारायण बल्लाळ मुख्य प्रधान”¹⁸³

Madhavrao I called Raghunathrao and requested him to make him Peshwa and look after him. Already, an unwritten law had come in existence that the office of the Peshwa would be hereditary. Madhavrao I added in the law that the Peshwa would decide his successor. He decided his brother as his successor as he didn't have son. Neither the Chhatrapati nor the Maratha confederacy could do anything. The Chhatrapati's work was only to give robes whoever came to Satara for the Peshwaship.

4.2.4.1 The Peshwa's Respect for the Chhatrapati

In terms of administration and politics, the Peshwa had become important compared to the Chhatrapati after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj; but in the private life, both of them gave respect and honour to each other. It could be seen during the reign of Narayanrao Peshwa. The Chhatrapati had sent many *nazranas* for the Peshwa to Poona in December 1772. "Shield,

swords with sheath, jewels 50, jewels 16, case, jeweled sword, girdle 2.”¹⁸⁴ The king gave gifts from time to time to his ministers, specially the Peshwa.

Whenever the king used to come in Poona at Shaniwar Wada, the Peshwas gave a lot of respect and hospitality. The Chhatrapati visited the Peshwa on 20 December 1772 in Poona. The Peshwa and his whole family were in the service of the Chhatrapati. “The Chhatrapati Maharaj was given the feast and a dance program was organized at the same time.”¹⁸⁵ After giving this information in the Peshwa Diaries, the names of twelve lady dancers are given. It means that the program of dance was organized for the king.

On one hand the Peshwas were trying to dominate the king and the other sardars were pandering in the policies of the Peshwas and on the other hand the Chhatrapatis were happy with such type of feasts and dances arranged by the Peshwa. It didn't suit the position. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj neither gave impotence nor time to any type of entertainment throughout his life. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was interested in entertainment, but first he gave importance to the administration. The later Chhatrapatis could not create their dominance in the administration, but were happy with the entertainment.

On second day the Chhatrapati left for Satara. “While giving farewell, the Peshwa gave nazar of *mandil*, *chaadar baadli*, *zaga baadli*, *kimkhaap*, *patkaa*.”¹⁸⁶ The Chhatrapati used to give the gifts to the Peshwa. The Peshwa also used to give the gifts or nazars to the Chhatrapati. Though the Chhatrapati had very less power than his Pradhan in the administration, the

Peshwas used to give more respect to the Chhatrapatis in their private life as their master.

4.2.4.2 Assassination of Narayanrao Peshwa

The office of Peshwa became so important after Madhavrao I that it came to be interpreted as Peshwa means Maratha Empire and Maratha Empire means the Peshwa. The Peshwa had become completely de facto ruler of the empire. The sardars were ready to go to any level and to use any means to get that office. The best example of such a sardar is Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao wanted to become Peshwa since 1761 i.e. the death of his brother Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. The wish became strong after the death of his nephew Peshwa Madhavrao I, due Narayanrao Peshwa his wish could not be fulfilled. Madhavrao I had convinced Raghunathrao to look after Narayanrao and guide him to run the administration, but he wanted to use the power directly. He was restless as his desire was not fulfilled, so he conspired against Narayanrao. He plotted to assassinate him. Some historian said that Muhammad Tughluq had conspired against his father to get the throne. Raghunathrao was uncle of Narayanrao. It was not an emotional matter for him.

Sumersing Gardi was the chief of Gardi guards. He had been asked to assassinate Narayanrao Peshwa. Sumersing and his men entered in Shaniwar Wada to attack the Peshwa on 30 August 1773. When the Peshwa came to know about the gardis, he ran to his uncle Raghunathrao as he was very scared. "He fell on Raghunatrao's feet and begged him to save his life and take charge of the government."¹⁸⁷ Raghunathrao was waiting for this oppourtunity. He wanted the power. The Peshwa himself offered the power,

but it was too late. The Gardis were chasing Narayanrao. They came into the chamber of Raghunathrao where the Peshwa was sitting holding the legs of his uncle. “Sumersing struck the Peshwa with his sword and killed him (Narayanrao).”¹⁸⁸ It was the first and last murder in the history of Marathas for the power.

The incident shows that what was the importance of the Peshwaship? The entire administration had centered around the Peshwa. The Peshwaship means whole India was under the control of the Peshwa. That is why Raghunathrao killed his nephew to enjoy the power. Anandibai, wife of Raghunathrao, was also involved in the conspiracy. She had modified one word in the letter which was to be given to Sumersing. “Raghunath himself vowed that when it left his hands it authorized the commandant to seize his nephew. But when it reached its destination the word “seize” (dhurave) had been altered into “kill” (maarawe); it was always said, by her own people, that the writer was Anandibai, Raghunath’s wife.”¹⁸⁹

While all this was happening, the Chhatrapati could not do anything. In Chhatrapati’s situation, no matter who became Peshwa, there were no signs of change. The Chhatrapati was helpless in such a situation. His own *Mukhya Pradhan*, Peshwa was assassinated. He had no option rather being a bystander. The office of the Chhatrapati had become an ornament in the administration. His function was mere to sanction the decisions taken by the Peshwas. Raghunathrao felt craving of the Peshwaship and he took very dangerous step to fulfill his wish. He killed his own nephew through the conspiracy to become the supreme of the Maratha Empire and Maratha confederacy. It is said that everything is fair in politics and war, so some time the lust of power makes the human being to forget the blood relations.

It can be seen with the conspiracy made by Raghunathrao against the Peshwa.

4.2.4.3 Raghunathrao's Attempts for the Peshwaship

The office of the Peshwa was vacant after the death of Narayanrao. He didn't have son, but his wife Gangabai was pregnant when he was assassinated. Narayanrao Peshwa had neither son nor brother to be a successor of the Peshwaship, so Raghunathrao was the only person from Bhat family for the Peshwaship. That is why he had made the conspiracy. He was very shrewd. He was very careful for his next actions. Sardars in Poona suspected that Raghunathrao had planned to kill the Peshwa, but no one was speaking openly.

Raghunathrao didn't become the Peshwa immediately after the death of Narayanrao. He might have thought that if he became Peshwa, it would mean that he killed Narayanrao for the Peshwaship. So, he decided to take the robes of Peshwaship for his son Amrutrao. "Amrutrao was the adopted son of Raghunathrao."¹⁹⁰ He thought that though Amrutrao became Peshwa, he would exercise all the rights and functions of the office. The superstitious nature of Raghunathrao was also one of the reasons for taking robes of Peshwaship for his son. "Ramraja is an unsuccessful. Those who takes robes from him do not get success, that was the understanding of Dada, instead of taking the robes himself, he decided to give it to his adopted son Amrutrao."¹⁹¹

Raghunathrao was also called as Raghobadada or Dada. "He sent his son Amrutrao and Mahipatrao Trimbak to Satara to bring the robes of Peshwaship."¹⁹² It is said that the women are more ambitious than the men.

Similarly, Anandibai, wife of Raghobadada, was very ambitious, but insidious woman. She suggested and convinced her husband to take the robes of Peshwaship. He became ready to become the Peshwa. He wrote a letter to Amritrao and informed, “The robes should be brought here for me, don’t accept for you, I will complete the expedition successfully, and come to Satara for the *darshan* of the Chhatrapati.”¹⁹³ Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj gave robes of Peshwaship to Amritrao for Raghunathrao.

Amritrao and Purandare came to Raghunathrao with robes of the Peshwaship. At that time, he was at the bank of Bhima River. He accepted the robes of Peshwaship and declared himself as a new Peshwa. He introduced the new seal of his name as a Peshwa, but instead of writing name of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, he wrote the name of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj on the seal.

“शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान रघुनाथ बाजीराव मुख्य प्रधान”¹⁹⁴

4.2.4.4 The Chhatrapati’s Helplessness

Two things from the Peshwaship in case of Raghunathrao once again show the Chhatrapati’s helplessness in the administrative role. First one is that to become Peshwa was Raghunathrao’s own decision. He sent Amritrao to Satara to take the robes for himself. Afterwards he changed his decision and asked to bring it for him. He didn’t feel importance to go himself to Satara to take the robes of Peshwaship. It means that the rule and tradition of accepting the robes in front of the Chhatrapati itself was broken by Raghunathrao, which was being followed for many years. The acceptance of the robes out of Satara by Raghunathrao gave birth to a new tradition that

anyone can become Peshwa by sending anyone to Satara to bring the robes of Peshwaship. The same case happened in the matter of Sawai Madhavrao.

Second one was that Raghunathrao made a change in the rule of seal of Peshwa. There was the name of Chhatrapati, from whom the robes had been taken, on the seal. Every Peshwa had been following that rule since the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Raghunathrao wrote the name of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj instead of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He didn't go to receive the robes of the Peshwaship and he didn't write the name of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj on his seal. It means that he had respect about Chhatrapati but not for Ramraja Maharaj. He had humiliated the king, but the king could not take any action or decision against Raghunathrao.

4.2.5 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao

Raghunathrao had received the robes of the Peshwaship and declared himself as the Peshwa. He was responsible for the assassination of Narayanrao Peshwa, so the sardars from Poona refused to accept him as a new Peshwa. Gangabai, wife of Narayanrao Peshwa, was pregnant. Nana Phadnis, Sakharambapu Bokil etc. powerful sardars took one decision that if widow of Narayanrao gave the birth to a baby boy, it was decided to make him a Peshwa. Before that it was necessary to protect Gangabai, because the sardars feared that Gangabai's life would be endangered by Raghunathrao. So, Gangabai was shifted secretly from Shaniwar Wada to fort of Purandar and guards were arranged for security.

4.2.5.1 The Chhatrapati Re-gains Importance (Temperory)

While deciding all these plans, Nana Fadnis, Bokil didn't forget to seek the permission of the Chhatrapati. "The high authority's (Peshwa's) wife is pregnant. It is better if she gives birth to boy child, otherwise the office should be given only by adopting a boy."¹⁹⁵ Nana Fadnis and other sardars considered it appropriate to seek the king's permission. They requested that if she didn't give birth to boy child, the king should give permission for the adoption of a boy. It was very necessary to inform and to take permission of the Chhatrapati, because Raghunathrao had declared himself as the Peshwa. No two Peshwas can be in the administration at the same time. So, it was important to inform to the king. The Chhatrapati also granted the request.

Important thing is that the request or seeking permission was only a formality. No one wanted the suggestion or advice of the king. the fact was that there were chances of two Peshwas in the future so the Chhatrapati was informed and indirectly asked to give the robes of Peshwaship to the son of Gangabai. No one requested as would you give the robes to the son of Gangabai? The Chhatrapati also gave the permission without opposing it. He didn't have any other option. Initially the Peshwaship was given as per the ability of the person, afterwards it was given hereditary, but it was given to the able person in the Bhat family. But after the death of Narayanrao it was given to Raghunathrao who had not come to Satara and the other sardars opposed him and requested the king to give Peshwaship to a child who was not born yet. It shows that the one minister of a Chhatrapati had got more importance than his master.

Nana Fadnis, whose real name was Balaji Janardan, sought the permission of the king in Gangaai's matter and on the other hand on 30 January 1774 "Nana Fadnis asks Baburao Krishna to remove the Chhatrapati at once to the fort and not leave him for a moment free in the town of Satara."¹⁹⁶ It clearly indicates that the function of the Chhatrapati was limited to give the robes of Peshwaship and other offices.

One important thing here is that a new sardar was emerging in the form of Nana Fadnis to dominate the Chhatrapati. It was important as per Nana to keep a watch on the Chhatrapati, because unknowingly a new rule was introduced that one who controlled Chhatrapati, had his control over the power. So, Raghunathrao had kept watch on the king. He was taking care that no other sardar from Poona should be in the contact of Chhatrapati. He wrote a letter to Baburao Krishna on 13 February 1774 and informed about the security of the Chhatrapati. "Rajashri should be kept in the fort and should not come in contact with defector....Until then, you have to be careful and make good arrangements. Ramchandra Narayan has been sent for the arrangement; he may have come to you. You and he together make arrangement."¹⁹⁷

Nana Fadnis was not ready to accept Raghunathrao as the Peshwa. Other sardars also opposed him. That is why the Chhatrapati was taken in confidence and requested to give the robes of Peshwaship to the son of Gangabai. Raghunathrao feared that all those sardars would conspire against him by taking the king in confidence. So, he ordered to Baburao Krishna to keep watch on the Chhatrapati and make sure that any person from Poona should not meet him.

Overall, it is clear from the letter of Raghunathrao and Nana to the king that there was a lot of importance of the Chhatrapati for getting the appointment in the office of the Peshwa. Though, according to Raghunathrao, Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was unlucky for him, it was Raghunathrao who gave orders for the security of the king; because he knew the role of the king would be important to secure his Peshwaship. It proved again that whoever was favored by Chhatrapati, he was to get the office of Peshwa.

4.2.5.2 Barbhai Council and the Chhatrapati

Raghunathrao had got the office of Peshwa with injustice. An alliance of influential sardars was formed against Raghunathrao. There were twelve sardars in the alliance, so it was known as '*Barbhai Mandal*'. The main purposes were to oppose Raghunathrao and to protect Gangabai and her child. This conspiracy was known as the '*Barbhai Karsthan*'. The council was led by Nana Fadnis and the other members were Sakharambapu Bokil, Haripant Phadke, Moroba Phadnis, Trimbakrao Pethe, Mahadaji Shinde, Tukojirao Holkar, Phaltankar, Bhagwanrao Pratinidhi, Maloji Ghorpade, Sardar Raste and Babuji Naik.

Raghunathrao had become the Peshwa after the assassination of Narayanrao, but the Barbhai Council never accepted the Peshwaship. They always opposed him and they started to manage the administration from Purandar fort in the name of Gangabai. "It means the two persons were managing the administration at a time after the assassination of Narayanrao."¹⁹⁸ Nana Fadnis and Barbhai Council were managing the administration, so the correspondence and issuing orders were in the name

of Gangabai. The charge of Vasai was at Visaji Keshav in 1774 AD. It was removed from him and handed over to Trimbak Vinayak. Regarding this, a letter was sent to Visaji Keshav in the name of Gangabai. The matter is found in the letter which was written on 06 December 1774.

“राजश्रीया विराजित राजमान्य राजश्री विसाजी केशव यांसी

प्रति मातुश्री गंगाबाई आसीर्वाद विनंती उपरी. येथील कुशल जाणून स्वकीयचे लि / / विशेष तालूके वसई येथील मामलत साल मजकूरी तूम्हाकडून दुर करुन रा त्रिंबक विनायक याजकडे सांगितली असे”.¹⁹⁹

It can be seen through the letter that the Barbhai Council was managing the administrative affairs in the name of Gangabai. So, it can be said that Gangabai was the first and the last female Peshwa to be represented in the Maratha administration.

The Barbhai Council began the new chapter in the Maratha administration by overcoming the wicked policies of Raghunathrao under the leadership of diplomatic Nana Fadnis. The main intention was to protect the Maratha Empire from Raghunathrao. He wanted to use the office of Peshwa for his own profit and it was not proper for the Maratha administration.

4.2.5.3 Birth of Sawai Madhavrao and Peshwaship

Gangabai gave birth to a baby boy. He was named Sawai Madhavrao. “Sawai Madhavrao was born on Adhik Vaishakh Maas Shake 1696 Shuddh 7.”²⁰⁰ “He was born on 18 April 1774, Wednesday on Purandar Fort.”²⁰¹ He was also called as Raosaheb. “Sawai Madhavrao was given the robes of the

Peshwaship on the fortieth day of his birth i.e. on 28 May 1774.”²⁰² The seal was created of the new Peshwa.

“श्री राजाराम नरपति हर्षनिधान

माधवराव नारायण मुख्य प्रधान”

Sawai Madhavrao got the robes of the Peshwaship on the fortieth day of his birth. As he was too infant, so Barbhai Council specifically Nana Fadnis began to manage the administrative affairs. A new tradition was introduced about the Peshwaship in the reign of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao. From Shamraj Ranzekar to Balaji Vishwanath, the Peshwaship was given to the capable and efficient person. Though it became hereditary after Balaji Vishwanath, those were the capable Peshwas. Peshwa Narayanrao's reign was not so effective, as he got very less duration. There was one similarity among all these Peshwas that all those were above sixteen-seventeen years of age. Sawai Madhavrao was of mere forty days. It means a new tradition was introduced that the robes of Peshwaship could be given to the infant too.

4.2.5.4 Regency of Nana Fadnis for the Peshwa

Peshwa was the subordinate to the Chhatrapati. He was as Pant Pradhan, Mukhya Pradhan. There are many instances of regency in the history of India. If the king was minor, his mother or someone other managed the administration. In the history of Maratha itself, Tarabai was regent of minor Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II. Most of the time, it was limited for the king as he was the head of the kingdom or empire. But in the reign of Sawai Madhavrao, he was made the Peshwa and Nana Fadnis

managed the administrative affairs on the behalf of the Peshwa. It shows the importance of the Peshwa than the Chhatrapati. Such a type of example is rare in the history.

Day by day the Peshwaship became important to such an extent that the Chhatrapatis were requested to give the robes of the Peshwaship to the new born baby. The Gods and Goddesses from the state and whole India were vowed to bless with baby boy as the Peshwaship should be in the Bhat dynasty. Nana Fadnis and a few other people from Poona spent lakhs of rupees for the Gods and Goddesses.

श्री

यादी नवस श्रीमंत राजश्री रावसाहेब शके 1696

1000 श्री मार्तंड जेजुरीस मोत्यांचा तुरा

800 श्री व्यंकोबास सहस्त्रभोजन ब्राह्मण दर आसामीस दक्षणा दर •।।• प्रमाणे

देवाजवळ करावे भोजन खर्चसुध्दा.

2160 श्री विश्वेश्वर व सोमेश्वर व नवलाई व पावणाई व पूर्वी वरखलनाथ एकूण

देव 6 सहा यांसी मुखवटे. सोन्याचे दर 24 प्रमाणे तोळे 144 सहा देवांची.

1100 श्री बहिरोबा नजीक किल्ले पुरंधर सोन्याचा मुखवटा हजार रुपयांचा शंभर

रुपये देवांपुढे ठेवावे. ²⁰³

The Peshwaship became so important that the Bhat family members prayed to Gods and Goddesses for a baby boy. They spent lakhs of rupees. The Chhatrapati may not have made so many vows to have a son, so much so that Nana Fadnis and other made so many vows for the son of Gangabai.

4.2.5.5 Barbahi Council Against Raghunathrao

After receiving the robes of the Peshwaship for the Sawai Madhavrao, the Barbhai Council sent letters in Swaraj and entire India. It was written in that, “Now letters will come as Raghunath Bajirao, no one should accept them. Raghunath Bajirao is rebellious. If anyone goes to him or joins him, he will be punished by the government.”²⁰⁴ The Barbhai Council decided to take strict action against Raghunathrao. A battle took place between Nana Fadnis and Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao was defeated in the battle, so he went to the British to seek their help. The British were waiting for such a golden opportunity. One prominent Maratha sardar had come to them, so it was like half done work for them. For the British, the Marathas were main obstacle in their expansion. They were not ready to accept Sawai Madhavrao as the Peshwa. They declared that Raghunathrao was the Peshwa, so the negotiations would be with him only. So, it caused the First Anglo-Maratha war. The war came to an end with the Treaty of Salbai. One of the important conditions in the treaty strengthened the position of Sawai Madhavrao as the Peshwa. Madhavrao II was acknowledged as Peshwa of the Maratha Empire by the British.

The treaty shows that the Peshwa had more importance than the Chhatrapati. The enemy has nothing to do with who is the minister of the king. The treaty is done with the king. But the treaty of Salbai was between the British and the minor Peshwa. Nana Fadnis made the British accept Sawai Madhavrao as the Peshwa.

4.2.5.6 Royal Letters in the Name of Four Months' Peshwa

The royal and administrative correspondence was in the name of Gangabai on the behalf of the Peshwa before the birth of Sawai Madhavrao. Sawai Madhavrao got the robes of Peshwaship on the fortieth day of his birth. After that all the decisions were taken by Barbhai Council specifically Nana Fadnis. But the Name of Sawai Madhavrao was written on the documents, letters, and orders etc. A letter was written on 08 August 1774 about the Saranjam. There is the name and seal of Sawai Madhavrao on the letter, who was merely of 4 months old.

“ राजश्रीया विराजीत राजमान्य राजश्री नारो आपाजी स्वामी गोसावी यासी
पो माधवराव नारायण प्रधान नमस्कार विनंती उपरी येथील कुशल जाणोन स्वकीये
कुशल लिहीत जाणे विशेष”

4.2.5.7 Nana's Correspondence with the Chhatrapati about the Peshwas's Ceremonies

Nana Fadnis and the Barbhai Council were making all the moves by taking the Chhatrapati in the confidence. All the information, from the shifting of Gangabai to Purandar fort to the post birth rituals was given to the Chhatrapati. When Gangabai was taken to Purandar Fort, Nana Fadnis sent Laxmanpant to Satara to give the details of the arrangement at the fort to the Chhatrapati. The Chhatrapati wrote a letter to Nana Fadnis on 28 April 1774. He wrote in the letter that he became happy as Nana Fadnis informed him about the *namkaran* ceremony of the son of Gangabai. He ordered to complete the ceremony successfully. On 1 May 1774, Nana Fadnis wrote a letter to the Chhatrapati informing him that Gangabai's son was named

Sawai Madhavrao. Nana Fadnis gave the invitation to the Chhatrapati for the Thread ceremony of Sawai Madhavarao. “Satarkar Dhakte Shahu Maharaj had come to Pune for the thread ceremony.”²⁰⁵

Nana Fadnis informed each and every detail to the Chhatrapati in the beginning of the reign of Sawai Madhavrao. He gave full respect and honor to the king as it was the prior duty of the Peshwa.

4.2.5.8 Consent of the Chhatrapati for the Appointments

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj gave the robes of various offices to the sardars during the reign of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao. Shivaji Bhosale was to be appointed as the Senasaheb Subhan in 1774-75. The Chhatrapati completed all the formalities and informed through the letter. “Shivaji Bhosale, Sena Saheb Subha, was informed that the Raja was graciously pleased to confer on him the office of Sena Saheb, that he had sent clothes, jewelry, a sword, a shield, a seal, and an elephant for being presented to Shivaji Bhosale in honour of the event and that the present should be accepted on an auspicious day.”²⁰⁶ It shows that it was necessary to get consent for the appointment made by the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao and Nana Fadnis. The office was not having any importance without receiving the robes from the Chhatrapati.

In this way the Chhatrapati became the nominal not only for the Peshwas, but also for the other sardars due to the changing political conditions. It was a kind of humiliation of the position of the Chhatrapati. It was the tragedy in the history of the Marathas, because the Peshwas and their attendants used the power of the Chhatrapatis for their selfishness.

They gave the respect to the Chhatrapati as a formality. Nana Fadnis also was not an exception for that.

4.2.5.9 Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and the Heir Issue

It is said that the history repeats itself. It comes true also. Though there was difference between political career of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, there was similarity about heir issue. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj spent his last few years in misery due to the inheritance issue. As he didn't have son, there was always clashes among the Chhatrapati, his wife, Maharani Tarabai and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. After 25 years from 1749 AD, the same condition took place in the Maratha Empire. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj also didn't have son. Nana Fadnis played an important role in this matter.

The letter which was written on 7 May 1774 throws light on the seriousness of the matter. It was a strong wish of Nana Fadnis that the Chhatrapati should adopt a boy as his heir in his lifetime itself. So, he was convincing him again and again. He advised to the Chhatrapati through Baburao Krishna for adaptation. Baburao conveyed the message to the king. What the answer he received from the king he informed to Nana Fadnis. The Chhatrapati said, "I am just forty years. I hope to have a son of my own, and let's try another marriage. Let's wait for a year or six months."²⁰⁷

The king told his age less. It means he was telling his age wrong, because Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj II died in 1727 AD. Chhatrapati Ramraja was born after three months of his father's death. He was crowned in 1750 AD. It means at that time his age was 22 – 23 years. The letter was written in 1774 AD. It means that when the letter was written, he was 46 –

47 years old. He may have underestimated his age so that age would not be an obstacle for having son. This is understood from the available documents.

Nana Fadnis was trying his best to convince the king to adopt a boy. But the king was not ready. He wanted his own son should be the heir of the Maratha Empire. He ensured that if he did not have a son, he would adopt a child from the Bhosale clan.

4.2.5.10 The Peshwa's Importance for the Chhatrapati

What was the significance of the Peshwa for the king is revealed through his sentences in the same letter? The Chhatrapati said, "It is better to have a son, if not I will look for a ten days old boy from the Bhosale clan and adopt him through the Peshwa. I have no one but the Peshwa. Matushri Aaisaheb's imprisonment was tolerated only for Peshwa Nanasaheb. Narayanro had a son recently; this is as my son and Peshwa. But I know that the king should be only Bhosale. But wait for another two years."²⁰⁸

It is clear from the above sentences by the king that he told clearly that he didn't have anyone but only Peshwa. He became emotional and said that only for Peshwa Balaji Bajirao he endured the imprisonment of Tarabai. It clears that the Chhatrapati was depended upon the Peshwa and the Peshwa depended upon the Chhatrapati only to secure his office. In short, the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa had become the two sides of the same coin. The coin is worthless without a single side.

4.2.5.11 The Political Importance of the Chhatrapati

Though the Chhatrapati had become nominal head of the state, but the position had a lot of political importance. That's why Mudhoji Bhosale was

struggling to become the Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj didn't have son, so Mudhoji Bhosale was trying to become the successor of the throne of Satara as he was from the Bhosale clan. He was aware that he could control the powerful Peshwa only by becoming the Chhatrapati as he was going to become the emperor of the Maratha Empire. He was aware that to become the Chhatrapati was the only way to control the power of the Peshwas and the Maratha Empire. There was the control of Nana Fadnis not only over the Chhatrapati but also on the Peshwa. It means that indirectly he was the head of the Maratha Empire. Mudhoji Bhosale, Raghunathrao and the British didn't like the control of Nana Fadnis over the Empire. "Even Hastings (British Governor General) made preparations to make Mudhoji the Chhatrapati by taking him to Satara to defeat Nana."²⁰⁹

The Marathas were the strongest obstacle for the British. They were waiting for the Maratha sardars to join them. The British were ready to help Mudhoji to become the Chhatrapati, because they could rule over the Maratha Empire indirectly as the Chhatrapati would be in their control.

The Barbhai Council came to know about the conspiracy of the British and Mudhoji Bhosale. When Devajipant understood that Mudhoji wanted to become the Chhatrapati and for that he was taking help of the British, he wrote a letter to him in very harsh words. He wrote in the letter, "If you (Mudhoji Bhosale) accept the throne of the Chhatrapati through the *firangi* (British), the entire Maratha *Mandal* will go against you."²¹⁰ Even before that, there was a failed attempt by Raghunathrao to make Janoji Bhosale the Chhatrapati. When Tarabai understood that it was not possible to control Ramraja Maharaj, she was trying to make Chhatrapati of Satara to

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur. But that conspiracy failed due to the diplomacy of Balaji Bajirao Peshwa.

Though the Chhatrapati had become the nominal in the administration after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the importance of the office was as it is. It clears that the Chhatrapati means the Maratha Empire and the Maratha Empire means the Chhatrapati. There are no any special moves of the king in the game of Chess, but all pieces are used to protect the king. Every player tries to use his pieces to checkmate the king of the opponent. So, all pieces have the main job to protect the king from the opponent's pieces. This example applies to the Chhatrapati in the Peshwa period. The Chhatrapatis didn't have any special functions, but some people from the Maratha confederacy were trying to become the Chhatrapati. Some were trying to control the Chhatrapati and some were trying to avoid the humiliation of the office. So much so that even the mighty British felt that Chhatrapati should be under their control, so they were ready to help Mudhoji Bhosale to become the Chhatrapati.

It shows that though the Chhatrapati was the nominal head of the Empire, it had a lot of administrative significance. Just like a precious necklace, only diamonds are visible and important, but the knot that binds these diamonds together is never seen. If there is no knot, all the diamonds will be scattered. In the same way the Chhatrapati was performing the function to unite all the sardars and people of the Maratha confederacy. The knot of a garland is never seen, but it has a lot of importance. Similarly, though the power of the Chhatrapati couldn't be seen in the Peshwa period, it had a lot of significance.

Nana petitioned Chhatrapati for adoption so that there would be no confusion in the Maratha kingdom due to the issue of inheritance. The inheritance issue became so important that Nana Fadnis, Sakharambapu and Barbhai Council on one side and Raghunathrao, Mudhoji Bhosale, the British at other side were trying to control the Chhatrapati and the office of Chhatrapati respectively. It was during this time that the rumors began to spread. “Nana Fadnis enjoins Baburao Apte at Satara to be extremely watchful about the admission and departures into and from the fort, as there were thick rumors that efforts were being made to release the Chhatrapati and bring about a revolution.”²¹¹

The throne of Satara got a lot of importance as Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj didn't have son. Meanwhile, in 1777 AD, the Chhatrapati fell ill. His health was deteriorating day by day. Nana Fadnis and Sakharambapu thought that if the king died without adoption, there would be chaos in the Swaraj. So, while the king was alive, they decided to adopt a boy from the Bhosale dynasty.

4.2.5.12 Adoption of the Heir

Finally, they got success in convincing the king. The King also became ready for the adoption. “Baavikar Bhosale's sons, three, Vithoji, Parshuram and Chatursing, the eldest of them, Vithoji was formally adopted on Bhadrapad Shukla 13 dated 15 September. Named Dhaakte Shahuraje.”²¹² Finally Nana became successful in his efforts. He was very efficient and diplomatic person. He was one of the three and half wises. It was not difficult task for him to make the king ready for the adoption. He

was aware of the future chaos, so foresighted Nana Fadnis was convincing again and again the king for adaptation and he achieved the success.

Nana Fadnis made arrangement of the education for the new Prince Shahu. The education was like education of any son of an emperor. “Nimbaji bin Tukoji Pawar was sent to Satara on a Salary of Rs. 12 every two months for training the Raja’s son in the use of the sword.”²¹³

4.2.5.13 Death of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj

By December 1777 AD, the King fell seriously ill. He was about fifty years old. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj died on 09 December 1777.²¹⁴

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was the sixth Chhatrapati of the Swaraj. Maharani Tarabai made him the Chhatrapati. Despite being a prince, he had to live the early life as a common boy. He couldn’t get education, luxurious life like a prince of an emperor. There was no change after becoming the Chhatrapati.

4.2.5.14 The Evaluation of the Reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj

The condition of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was like Karna in Mahabharata. Karna was from the royal family and Kshatriya clan, but he was humiliated throughout his life as he was nurtured by a charioteer. Though Duryodhan made him the king of Anga for his benefit, the Pandavas never accepted him as a king. He was more capable, efficient and powerful than the Pandavas, but he had to face humiliation and insult. When one of the wheels of his chariot was stuck in the land, Shalya Mama, his charioteer, left him alone in the battlefield him by saying that it was not his work to

remove the wheel from land. Lord Indra took his all *kawach-kundal*, which used to protect him, to make his son, Arjun safe. The great warrior, powerful Karna was not accepted as a Kshatriya as his only mistake was, he was nurtured by a charioteer.

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj's condition was almost same like Karna. His grandmother Tarabai handed over him to his sister immediately after his birth to protect him from conspiracy. Despite a being a prince, he could not get proper education, luxurious life. Maharani Tarabai made him Chhatrapati for her benefit. When he was not ready to act according to her, she imprisoned him and kept him in the house arrest. She blamed that he was an imposter, he was not a Kshatriya. Maharani Tarabai and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao neglected the efficiency and the ability of the king and humiliated him. At least there was a respect on the seals, but Raghunathrao insulted him by writing Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's name on his seal instead of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj.

He had all the powers of the Chhatrapati, but he was Ramraja so he was not authorized to exercise his powers. The Peshwa and Maharani Tarabai were responsible for the bad condition of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. The King had to face the bad situation from his birth till the death. Eventually, he did not have a son, which led to the inheritance problems. Therefore, the entire reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was a tragedy.

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Chapter V

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration (1777 AD to 1818 AD)

Chapter V

The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration (1777 AD to 1818 AD)

5.1

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and the Administration (1777 AD to 1808 AD)

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had three daughters, but didn't have son. Therefore, the elder son of Tryambakji Bhosale had been adopted by Ramraja Maharaj and named as Shahu. Afterwards he was called as Shahu II. On 9 December 1777, Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj passed away. He was crowned immediately after the death of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. "As there was no *muhurat* (auspicious day) for coronation for whole day, so the coronation of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (II) took place after one year on 11 December 1778 at Satara."¹

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was crowned to the throne of Satara as seventh Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire. At the time of his coronation, there was influence of Nana Fadnis and Sakharambapu Bokil over the Maratha state. Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao was about four-five years old. So, Nana Fadnis managed all the administrative affairs. As new Chhatrapati was crowned, so the stamp of the Peshwa was also changed.

श्री शाहू नरपति हर्षनिधान
माधवराव नारायण मुख्य प्रधान²

5.1.1 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao

5.1.1.1 Changes in the Chronology System

In 1777, Nana Fadnis and Sakharambapu Bokil made an important change in the administration. On the occasion of coronation, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj introduced 'Rajyabhishek Shak', which was also called as the 'Shivshak'. It was a new system of calendar which was to be used in the Maratha administration. The Rajyabhishek Shak was used by every Chhatrapatis and Peshwas even after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj used the Shak in a letter which was written on 5 March 1693.

"स्वस्ति श्री राज्याभिषेक शके 19 अंगिरनाम संवछरे फाल्गुन शु ।। 8 भानुवासरे क्षत्रियकुलावतंस श्री राजाराम छत्रपति याणी देशाधिकार व लेखक वर्तमान भावी प्रा खटाऊ यासी आज्ञा केली ऐसीजे." ³

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj used the Shak during his reign. He used it in a letter which was written on 27 March 1731.

"स्वस्ति श्री राज्याभिषेक शके 57 विरोधकृत संवत्सरे चैत्र शुद्ध प्रतिपदा मंदवासर क्षत्रिये कुलावतंस श्री राजा शाहू छत्रपति स्वामी यांची संताजी बिन कान्होजी पासलकर यासी दिल्ले इनामपत्र यैसिजे." ⁴

The Shak was in use till the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. "In 1777, with the help of Nana Fadnis, to avoid the complication in chronology, Sakharam Bapu Bonkil accepted the British chronology and stopped the use of 'Shivshak'."⁵ Nana Fadnis and Sakharam Bapu Bokil stopped the chronology which had been in use for the last one hundred and

three years. No one could oppose the change, as everyone had accepted their influence and everyone's mindset was that whatever decisions they took were the right.

5.1.1.2 Consent of the Chhatrapati

It was necessary to get consent from the Chhatrapati for any administrative appointments during the period of Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa too. Without formal consent of the Chhatrapati, the process of appointment could not be completed. Jiwanrao Vitthal was appointed in the office of Sumant (foreign minister). He was given the robes of Sumantship by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. "Jiwanrao Vithal was appointed Sumant in Tisa Sabain. At the request of the Peshwa, cloths of honor were given to Jiwanrao by the Sattara Raja."⁶

After the death of Shriniwas Pandit Pratinidhi, his son, Chiranjeev Parashram Shriniwas was given the robes of Pratinidhiship. Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa informed about the appointment through a letter. "The command of God has reached Shriniwas Pandit Pratinidhi (i.e. he is dead), the clothes of the post have to be given to his son; clothes of honor, a head-dress and arms; have therefore been sent with Sadashiv Anant, request Shrimant Maharaj Rajashri Swami to give the aforesaid personage the Pratinidhi's dress of honor."⁷

In the year of 1779-80, Raghoji Bhosale was appointed as the Sena Saheb Subha. So, for the appointment, the formal consent was required of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The Peshwa didn't have the authority for the appointment without the consent of the Chhatrapati. "Raghoji Bhosale was informed that the office of Senasaheb Subha was conferred on him by the

Raja of Satara and that he should keep good army, administer his province and serve Government with devotion.”⁸

Any important administrative appointments like Peshwa, Sumant, Sena Saheb Subha or any other important posts didn't have legal importance and authority without the consent of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II during the period of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao. The formality of offering robes of different posts was completed by only the Chhatrapati.

5.1.1.3 The Hospitality and Respect to the Chhatrapati

Whenever the Chhatrapatis used to come to Pune, the Peshwas never missed a bit in their hospitality. The first three Peshwas from the Bhat family always believed that serving Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was their prior duty. Though Chhatrapati Ramraja lacked control over the administration, the Peshwas were always ready for his hospitality during the visit at Poona. When Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was in Poona, Peshwa Narayanrao was in his service all the time. In the same way, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II visited Poona during the reign of the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao. Nana Fadnis and other sardars felicitated and honored him on the behalf of Peshwa. The Chhatrapati offered various gifts to the Peshwa. It included “apparel, *chira jari baadli* one, *zaga jari badli* one, *odhani jari badli* one, *tumba kinkhapi* one.”⁹ On the second day Peshwa met mother of Chhatrapati and offered gifts her also.

Not only on the occasion of the visit to Shaniwar Wada, but also from Poona too were the gifts sent to the Chhatrapati to Satara. “In 1784-85, the Peshwa had sent the cloths of Rs. 2, 533 for the Chhatrapati as a gift.”¹⁰ There are a number of such types of examples of the gifts given by

Chhatrapati and the Peshwa to each other. Though Nana Fadnis was dominant and the Chhatrapati's condition was as in the house arrest during the reign of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao, he always provided the services to the king.

5.1.1.4 Death of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao

In 1795, he was suffering from fever. Unconsciously, he jumped from the balcony and fell on iron rods in the fountain on 25 October 1795. He got dangerous injury and he died on Tuesday, 27 October 1795.

5.1.2 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and Peshwa Bajirao II

The issue of the office of the Peshwa arose once again as Sawai Madhavrao did not have son. Raghunathrao's three sons Bajirao, Chimnaji Appa and adopted son Amrutrao were as close successors from the Baht family. "They were strictly guarded in confinement at Junnar and full of hatred towards Nana Phadnis."¹¹

5.1.2.1 Nana's Attempt to make Chimnaji the Peshwa

Bajirao was too cunning natured. He used to make secret correspondence with Sawai Madhavrao. He was too much greedy for the Peshwaship. Nana Fadnis was aware of his wish. That's why he was against the appointment of Bajirao as Peshwa. If it was necessary to select one of the three for the post of Peshwa, it was decided Chimnaji Appa would be adopted by Yashodabai, widow of Sawai Madhavrao. Chimnaji Appa was eleven years old at that time. Nana thought that he would easily control him as Sawai Madhavrao was in his control. Baloba Tatya, Parshuram Bhau etc.

sardars opposed the appointment of Chimnaji Appa as Bajirao was more capable than him. Nana Fadnis had to withdraw his idea before the majority.

Bajirao was brought to Poona and discussion took place between him and Nana Fadnis, according to which Bajirao was to become the Peshwa and Nana his principal minister. But within a few days, disagreements began to take place between him and Nana Fadnis and they began to look at each other with suspicion. Daulatrao Shinde supported Nana Fadnis. Nana Fadnis once again started to oppose Bajirao. In such a condition, the role of Chhatrapati was very important. The consent of Chhatrapati was necessary to become the Peshwa. Nana Fadnis, Bajirao, Shinde were in contact of Chhatrapati continuously. The activities like to visit the Chhatrapati secretly, to do secret correspondence with Chhatrapati were going on in Poona. Nana Fadnis came to Satara and visited Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. When the news reached to Bajirao, he requested him not to admit Nana into his presence so that whatever power that minister possessed was thus lost.

5.1.2.2 Appointment of Chimnaji Appa in the Office of Peshwa

Meanwhile, the disagreement between Bajirao and Daulatrao Shinde became stronger. Bajirao knew that it was impossible to become Peshwa without the support of Nana Fadnis and Shinde. Nana Fadnis requested to the Chhatrapati to turn down the plans of Bajirao and Shinde. He decided to make Chimnaji Appa the Peshwa. He returned to Poona and convinced Shinde and Parshuram Bhau to join him. He explained his view to make Chimnaji Appa the Peshwa. Despite his opposition, Parshuram Bhau brought Chimnaji Appa to Poona according to Nana. “Finally, it was decided to make Chimnaji an adoptive son of Sawai Madhavrao.”¹² The religious

chief like Narayan Dixit opposed the adoption, because the relation between Yashodabai and Chimnaji Appa was of cousin daughter-in-law and father-in-law. So, the adoption of uncle by his own nephew as a son was not appropriate as per the Hindu tradition. Therefore, many chiefs in Poona opposed the adoption. At the same time there were many people who supported Nana Fadnis. Finally, the ceremony of adoption took place on 2nd June 1796. Chimnaji was invested with the robes of Peshwaship.”

5.1.2.3 The Chhatrapati got the importance Again: Temporary

Once again Nana Fadnis became so dominant that he made Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj to give robes of Peshwaship to Chimnaji Appa. But an important thing was that the Chhatrapati never got so much importance as he got in that matter. Everyone was moving around the Chhatrapati. Anyone from the Bhat family could become Peshwa, but the consent of the Chhatrapati was must. It was necessary to receive the robes of the Peshwaship from Chhatrapati. That's why Chimnaji Appa became Peshwa, instead of Bajirao as he got the robes of Peshwaship from the Chhatrapati. Nana Fadnis had taken efforts to make Peshwa to Chimnaji, because he wanted to exercise the administrative power by controlling him. Later however, the situation changed. Daulatrao Shinde and Parshuram Bhau tried to dominate the minor Peshwa.

5.1.2.4 Bajirao II's appointment as a Peshwa and Chhatrapati's Helplessness

Nana Fadnis was the master in diplomatic politics and he was one of the three and half wise men in Peshwaai. He began to follow new political strategies to take all the authority of administration in his own hand. He was

making plan to make the Peshwa to Bajirao, whom he had opposed and made Peshwa to Chimnaji Appa. For this he took the help of Nizam Ali, an enemy of the Marathas. Nana Fadnis was the example of that person who can go to any extent to get the power. “Nizam Ali wholeheartly assisted in installing Bajirao in the Peshwaship with Nana as the sole administrator.”¹³

Daulatrao Shinde and other sardars on his side focused on Satara as they got the news of the conspiracy of Nana Fadnis. They were trying that Nana should not visit the Chhatrapati. They wrote in the name of Peshwa Chimanaji Appa to Baburao Krushna, Mutalik of Peshwa in Satara, “Chimnaji Madhavrao Pradhan Namskar Su || Sabaa Tisain Mayaa V Alaf. Rajshri Balaji Janardan (Nana Fadnis) was at Waai. It was learned that he went towards Pratapgad, Raigad. So, you make proper arrangement at fort in Satara and keep watch on king and be careful.”¹⁴

Again, everyone turned towards the Chhatrapati. The opponents of Nana Fadnis were trying to stop him to visit the Chhatrapati. But Nana Fadnis, who was perfect in conspiracies, had power to make things happen according to him. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was requested on the behalf of Nana Fadnis to give the robes of Peshwaship to Bajirao. “The poor Raja of Satara was now called upon to send fresh robes of Peshwaship with which Bajirao was invested on 5th December 1796.”¹⁵ In this way Bajirao became the last Peshwa of the Maratha Empire. He is known as Peshwa Bajirao II.

There was a lot of chaos in the administration of the Marathas due to the succession issue of the Peshwaship which had been going on for one year. The seeds of the tree of the downfall of the Maratha Empire were sown in that year and the tree collapsed in 1818 AD. The Chhatrapati got the

importance in that year, but it was only for the Peshwaship. But being a Chhatrapati, Shahu Maharaj II could not do anything to avoid the chaos.

5.1.2.5 Bajirao II: As a Peshwa

Bajirao II began to show his real cunning nature after a few days of Peshwaship. He began to oppose Nana Fadnis, because of whom he got the office of Peshwa. He openly told Nana that he would not act as Sawai Madhavrao, who was the puppet in his hand. So, various disagreements took place between him and Nana. Daulatrao Shinde had helped Bajirao II. Nana wanted to send Shinde out of Poona, so advised him to go to the North India. Shinde told him that he would go when he would get the salary of his army. Nana asked to Bajirao to give the amount to Shinde. The Peshwa cleared, “He would not supply funds to Sindhiya and that he was so poor that he had no oil for the lamps to light his palace, no betel leaves, nor rice for his daily food.” The relationship between Bajirao and Nana became so strained that Bajirao began to think that only if Nana was imprisoned, he could rule smoothly.

5.1.2.6 Conspiracy against Nana Fadnis

Peshwa and Daulatrao Shinde conspired against Nana Fadnis. Shinde invited Nana for dinner on 31 December 1797. Nana went to Shinde’s camp for dinner. After having the dinner, they discussed for a while and afterwards they went in different tents. Already some soldiers were arranged in the tent of Nana Fadnis. As soon as he entered into the tent, the soldiers attacked Nana Fadnis and captured him as a captive.

Nana Fadnis, who led and represented the administration of the Maratha Empire for twenty-five years, was deceived by the Peshwa and Shinde. Ambitious Bajirao found difficulties in managing the administration, so he again released Nana Fadnis for his benefits and convinced him to assist him. He offered him the office of Karbhari. After two years, Nana Fadnis died at the age of fifty-eight on 13 March 1800.

5.1.2.7. Rise of Chatursing Raje Bhosale

There was anarchy in Poona due to the uncontrolled rule of Peshwa Bajirao II, disputes between Daulatrao Shinde and women in his family and many more issues. Finally, it was decided from Satara court to handle entire situation and establish the peace in the administration. There was a rise of a sardar in the Maratha Empire during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. That sardar was Chatursing Raje Bhosale, younger brother of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. He was having all the qualities of a brave warrior, efficient sardar and diplomatic politician. He created his own identity in the last phase of the Maratha Empire. When Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was adopted and brought to Satara, Chatursing Raje also came with his brother and lived there forever. He was more efficient, clever, accomplished than his brother, the Chhatrapati. He had the ability to discern the persons and to understand the surrounding situation immediately.

5.1.2.8 Attempts to regain Dignity and Honour of the Chhatrapati

He had understood the policies of Nana Fadnis which were against the dignity of the Chhatrapati. His revolutionary nature didn't like the control of Nana Fadnis, who was a servant of a servant of the king, over the

Chhatrapati. The humiliation of the Chhatrapati was at its peak in the reign of Peshwa Bajirao II. The Peshwa didn't have loyalty towards the Swaraj and Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Chaturising Raje Bhosale wanted to become free from the control of Peshwa Bajirao II. There was respect for the Chhatrapati till the reign of Peshwa Narayanrao, but there were a lot of restrictions on Chhatrapati during the régime of Sawai Madhavrao and Nana Fadnis. Peshwa Bajirao II crossed all the limits of humiliation of the Chhatrapati. Chaturising wanted to regain the lost dignity, prestige, respect and importance of the Chhatrapati. At one time all the power of Maratha Empire was in the hands of Chhatrapati, but during after 1790s the central power had to act according to the sardars in Poona. The only task of Chhatrapati was to give robes of office of Peshwa and others to the persons decided by sardars in Poona. He had to give the robes without knowing the ability of the person for the post.

Three widows of Mahadji Shinde Laxmibai, Yashodabai and Bhagirathibai incited Chhatrapati against Peshwa and Daulatrao Shinde. Chaturising Raje accelerated his movements. Clever Chaturising Raje knew the current situation of Chhatrapati. He knew that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj would not get success fighting alone, so he sought the help from the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. Peshwa Bajirao II had imprisoned Nana Fadnis and sent his men to suppress the men of Nana Fadnis in Satara. It was a good opportunity for the Chhatrapati. He attacked on Peshwa's men and imprisoned them. In this way the Chhatrapati released himself from the restrictions of the Peshwa. The Peshwa was scared due to the movements of the Chhatrapati. He had requested the Chhatrapati to imprison the trustworthy men of Nana, but instead of that he imprisoned the Peshwa's

men. A big challenge was in front of him. “He dispatched Madhavrao Raste to put down the king and take position of town and fort.”¹⁶ Madhavrao could not face the strong resistance of Chatursing and his army. Chatursing defeated Madhavrao Raste and forced him to go out of Satara town. It was the second defeat of the Peshwa by the Chhatrapati.

5.1.2.9 War Between the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa: A Shameful Incident

It was a shameful incident. Once upon a time, the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa transformed Maratha kingdom into Maratha Empire together. The Chhatrapatis gave order and the Peshwas respected the command and acted according to it. Whatever victories were achieved were entirely offered at the feet of the Chhatrapatis. But in the reign of Bajirao II, the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa were fighting against each other. It was a tragedy in the history of the Maratha administration. The Peshwa sent Parshuram Bhau to Satara. He joined Madhavrao with his troops. At that time, however, Chatursing could not face the army of the Peshwa. Both of them captured fort and town of Satara. Chatursing went to Kolhapur, but the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur failed to help him. If the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur had helped him in time, the history of throne of Satara would have been different. In this way the freedom of the Chhatrapati of Satara was short-lived. Bajirao II was the first and last Peshwa who betrayed his master, the Chhatrapati, for his selfishness.

5.1.2.10 Bajirao II, the Holkars and the Chhatrapati

Bajirao's anarchy was on the rise. The disputes took place in the Maratha Confederacy due to the anarchy and uncontrolled rule of Bajirao II.

He interfered in the issue of succession of Indore and disappointed the Holkars. Yashwantrao Holkar declared war against Peshwa and defeated him as he had killed Vithoji Holkar by trampling him under the feet of an elephant. Bajirao II went to the British and took shelter there. Yashwantrao Holkar and some of the Maratha sardars opposed Bajirao to carry the administration as a Peshwa. Bajirao had escaped from Poona. A question arose in front of them as to who would manage all the administrative affairs. All the Maratha chiefs united under the leadership of Yashwantrao Holkar. They together took a decision to dismiss Bajirao II from the office of Peshwa and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gave the consent for the decision.

It was decided to appoint Amrutrao, adopted son of Raghunathrao and brother of Bajirao II, as a Peshwa. Later, it was decided that Sawai Madhavrao's widow Yadhodabai would adopt Vinayakrao, son of Amrutrao, and he would be given the robes of Peshwaship. But Yashodabai was in the captivity of Bajirao II at Raigad. Finally, a decision was taken that Vinayakrao would be appointed as Peshwa without adoption ceremony. "Holkar sent Fateh Singh Mane to Satara and brought robes of Peshwaship for Vinayakrao from the Chhatrapati in the last week of December."¹⁷

In this process Chaturising Raje Bhosale played an important role. He always opposed Bajirao II and his policies. So, he supported the decisions of Yashwantrao Holkar. When Fatehsing Mane came to Satara, Chaturising Raje requested to Chhatrapati to give the robes of Peshwaship for Amrutrao with him. He wrote to Yashwantrao about the robes in a letter on 20 December 1802. "The robes are given to Rajashri Trambakrao Amruteshwar Rajashri Fatehsing Mane from Yashwantrao on Margshirsh Vadya Ekdashi, Monday by requesting to Tirthrup Rajashri Swami."¹⁸

Bajirao II had gone to the British. He took the help of the foreign power to fight against his own people. For that he signed the Treaty of Bassein, which was caused for the downfall of the Maratha Empire. As per the norms in the Maratha administration, the Peshwa had right to control the sardars in the Confederacy. The Peshwa had importance after the Chhatrapati. Gradually the Peshwas became the whole and soul of the Maratha Empire. Therefore, Bajirao II became the head of the Empire. But at the time of the Treaty of Bassien, he forgot that he was a responsible chief of an Empire. Without taking anyone into confidence, he surrendered the Maratha Empire to the British for the sake of self-defense.

His ancestors Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao I, Balaji Bajirao, Madhavrao I fought against the enemies for the growth and protection of the empire. They never hurt anyone in the empire, because they knew that to run the administration smoothly each and everyone's cooperation was necessary. But Bajirao II opened the doors of the empire for the enemy to secure his personal life. It takes a lot of time, days and years to make anything, but a moment is also sufficient to destroy the prepared things. Many Chhatrapatis, Peshwas and sardars worked hard day and night for the welfare of the empire and Bajirao II began the decline in a moment. He again established his power Poona with the help of the British. The Chhatrapati gave the recognition to the politically dramatic developments considering the situation, because he didn't have any option. It shows the humiliation of the Chhatrapati by the Peshwa.

5.1.2.11 Chatursing's Strong Desire and Ambition

The Chhatrapati and Chatursing Raje were disappointed due to the Treaty of Bassien. The Peshwa was the servant of the Chhatrapati. The question of who gave the Peshwa the right to give the kingdom Chhatrapati to the British always bothered Chatursing. He was extremely angry with Bajirao II due the humiliation, insulting treatment, control over the expenditure etc. by him. "He always convinced the Chhatrapati to either kill ourselves or finish him (situation created by the Peshwa) by giving it a severe blow, rather than die in a dungeon."¹⁹ Not only Chatursing, but many of the sardars were ready to sacrifice their life for the Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, who was mentally weak as he had spent his entire life as in captivity, did not know whether to help his brother or not.

Chatursing Raje once again began his struggle to regain the lost dignity of the Chhatrapati. He took many sardars in Satara in confidence. He went to Nagpur and visited Raghuji Bhosale. Not only that much, "He met Lord Lake (A British) at Delhi."²⁰ He would have got the help from him, but he joined Yashwantrao Holkar, who was fighting against Bajirao II to unite the scattered Maratha Empire, and helped him. He sought the help of the Rajput kings Mansing, king of Jodhpur and king of Udaypur, but returned being disappointed. After that he met Kanhoji Gaikwad. Like Chatursing, he was also struggling for the state of Baroda. Both of them went to Baroda, but they didn't get success there too.

5.1.2.12 Consent of the Chhatrapati

Though the relation between the Chhatrapati and Peshwa Bajirao II were not good, the Peshwa had to go to Chhatrapati to get the formal consent

of the Chhatrapati for the appointments. Though he ignored some of the administrative norms and behaved irresponsibly, he didn't ignore the rule to go to Chhatrapati for the robes of various offices. After the death of Sachiv Shankarrao Pandit, the robes of the post of Sachiv were to be given to his adopted son, Chimanaji Shankar. So, in that regard, Peshwa Bajirao II wrote a letter to Chimnaji Shankar and informed him that he should go to Satara and request the Chhatrapati for the robes of the office of Sachiv. "Accordingly, you should request the Maharaja and deliver the dress of honor to Krishnaji Bhagwat, a karkun sent from the Sarkar."²¹

5.1.2.13 Peshwa's Control over Chhatrapati

Though there was control over the expenditure and authorities of the Chhatrapati, no Peshwa could control or cancel the authority of the Chhatrapati to give robes of various offices. It was necessary to get consent from the Chhatrapati for the office from Peshwa to Senasaheb Subha etc. But an important thing was that the decision of appointment of a specific person for a specific office used to be taken by the Peshwa. Even the private attendants and servants of the Chhatrapati at Satara were appointed and dismissed by the Peshwa. In 1797-98, some disturbances took place in the fort of Satara. Baburao Krishna was associated with the disturbances. Even Ganesh Anant was also involved in it. So, Ganesh Anant was charged fine and Baburao Krishna was imprisoned along with his family and his property was confiscated. All those actions were taken by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Both of them were sentenced in such a manner, so they requested Peshwa Bajirao II for release. "On appeal to the Peshwa the order was set aside and they were restored to their former offices."²²

The Chhatrapati was the supreme in the judicial system. The final decision was in the hand of the Chhatrapati. But during the reign of Bajirao II, it was far away to sentence the criminals, but such a condition was created that the Chhatrapati could not punish his own attendant and servants in his own court. Though the guilty was sentenced by the Chhatrapati, the final decision was in the hands of the Peshwa. Though the person was guilty and culpable of Chhatrapati, he was released and restored in his earlier office as he was loyal to the Peshwa.

5.1.2.14 Bajirao's Respect for Former Chhatrapati

There were some issues between Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Bajirao II, but it can be seen that Bajirao II showed respect towards former Chhatrapati. He was aware of the fame and greatness of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I. So, he always showed respect for him. That's why he had made an arrangement to look after the place of *Samadhi* of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I. "100 the tomb of Shahu Maharaj near palace in Satara city. The amount is given for *naaivadya* and *nandadeep*." ²³

5.1.2.15 End of the Certain Customs

The Chhatrapatis or the Peshwas ruled as vassal of the Mughal Empire since the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I and they proved it from time to time in front of the Mughal emperors. As a part of that various gifts, *nazars* used be offered by the Maratha Empire to the Badshahas. In that gifts there used to be a key. It was just like the process of show off as they were vassals. That custom was in practice till 1801 AD. "After that Bajirao II ended the custom with courage". ²⁴

5.2

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj and the Administration

(1808 Ad to 1818 Ad)

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj ascended the throne of Satara after the death of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. He was born on 18th January 1793²⁵. Pratapsinh was also called as Buvasaheb. Chhatrapati Pratapsinh was crowned on Vaishakh Vadya Saptami Manduvasari and after that he got married also. (Shake 1730 Jyeshtha Shukla 5 AD 1808 may 30)²⁶. He became the eighth Chhatrapati of Swaraj. At that time his age was nearly 15 years. That is why Chhatrapati's mother Anandibai looked after the administration as the regent of minor Chhatrapati for some years.

Like his ancestors, Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj also introduced his own '*rajmudra*' or royal seal

गौरीनाथवरप्राप्तशाहूराजात्मजन्मजः ।

मुद्रा प्रतापसिंहस्य भद्रा सर्वज्ञ राजते ।²⁷

5.2.1 Chatursing's Anger Against Bajirao II

Peshwa Bajirao II had imposed a lot of restrictions on Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II since the beginning of his regime as a Peshwa. Since new Chhatrapati was only fifteen, his restrictions had grown even more. Chatursing Bhosale, Uncle of Chhatrapati was already against the Peshwa due to his policies. The Peshwa had lost his control over the Maratha Empire as per the Treaty of Bassein. It means he had handed over the empire to the British indirectly. Restrictions over Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj, humiliating behavior with Chhatrapati led to the outbreak of Chatursing Bhosale's anger. So, Chatursing rebelled against the Peshwa. The rebellion was the shameful incident in the history of Marathas and Chhatrapatis and Peshwas. Chatursing revolted against Peshwa to regain Chhatrapati's lost glory. It will be the rare example in the history that the King's brother had to revolt against the minister for the dignity of the King. There are many incidents in the history of the world that the ministers had revolted against the king. The Peshwa was completely responsible and to some extent Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was also responsible for the incident of rebellion. Such situation arose because of the weak nature of the Chhatrapatis and the cunning nature of Peshwa Bajirao II.

Chatursing Bhosale was trying to get the help from various kings in Hindustan for the prestige of Chhatrapati. He came to Ujjain from Gujarat. There he got the news about the death of his brother, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II as well as the confinement of his wife and children by Peshwa. Bajirao Raghunathrao got scared of Chatursing, so he decided to stop his rebellion, so he kept Chatursing's wife and son, Balwantraje in a house arrest in Poona.²⁸ The rebel of Chatursing was dangerous for the Peshwa. He sent Trimbakji Dengale to defeat and capture Chatursing. Trimbakji Dengale was as cunning as his master, Bajirao II. He made a plot against Chatursing. He sent his messengers to him to visit under the specious promises of advancement in Bajirao's name.

Chatursing visited Gangadhar Shastri of Baroda in August 1810. He discussed with him about the welfare of the Maratha Empire. Shastri advised Chatursing, "There was absolutely no hope for his plan of riving Maratha state against the mighty power of the British, and that the best course for him

would be to accept whatever chance the British would offer him”²⁹. The revolutionary Chaturising didn’t accept the advice of Shastri. It is always better to live life for one day as a tiger than the hundred days as a goat, so he planned for the next action. Dengale had already invited him for a visit. Chaturising was totally trapped in Dengale’s lie. They decided to meet at Malegaon in Khandesh. There Chaturising was taken captive by Dengale on 10 February 1811. He was kept in the fort of Malegaon in confinement. Afterwards he was shifted to Raigad. He died in confinement after seven years on 15 April 1818. A revolutionary chapter was closed in the history of Marathas with the death of Chaturising.

Chaturising Bhosale was having the quality of a king. If he had been the Chhatrapati instead of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, history of Marathas would have been something different. The prestige of Chhatrapati would have increased again after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I. Internal conflicts, treaty of Bassein such shameful events would not have occurred in the history of Marathas. The fall of the Maratha Empire would have taken place after fifteen – twenty years instead of 1818AD.

5.2.2 The Peshwa’s Control Over the Chhatrapati.

The humiliation of Chhatrapati was at peak during the regime of Bajirao II. There was the control of Peshwa Nanasaheb, Peshwa Madhavrao I, Peshwa Narayanrao, and Peshwa Madhavrao II also over the Chhatrapatis, but these Peshwas neither controlled the expenditure of the Chhatrapati nor humiliate them as much as Bajirao II. His treatment towards the Chhatrapatis was very inferior. Maaisaheb, mother of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj demanded four hundred rupees to Bajirao II for performing pooja of

Lord Narsoba. It indicates the suppression of Chhatrapati and his family by Peshwa³⁰. They had to demand for money to Peshwa for pilgrimage, travelling etc. Anandibai wanted to go on pilgrimage to Pandharpur, Shikhar Shinganapur and Jejuri for the holy *darshan* of Lord Vitthala, Lord Mahadev and Lord Khandoba respectively. The Peshwa provided money for the pilgrimage. When Anandibai returned from pilgrimage, she expressed her gratitude towards Bajirao through a letter. She said in the letter written on 12 October 1810 to Bajirao II. “I wanted to go on a pilgrimage. As soon as I spoke to you, you made arrangement. I always feel happy. I cannot write in the letter, It never happened and is impossible in future. You approved my promises. You arranged expenses more than that and sent with Trimbakji. He provided everything”.³¹ Chhatrapati’s mother had to express her gratitude towards the servant of Chhatrapati i.e, the Peshwa for making arrangement to go on the pilgrimage.

However, Bajirao had respect for Maaisaheb. She had also a good relationship with Bajirao II. Though, she was blessed with good qualities of a regent, but she was helpless in front of crafty Peshwa. There was so much fear of Peshwa that Maaisaheb used to say to the Peshwa, “Our whole responsibility is on you”³², “We have no one, but Bajirao.”³³ The Pradhans, Jagirdars, Sardars had a great deal of respectful fear for Jijabai, the mother of Shivaji Maharaj, the first Chhatrapati of the Swaraj. Being a mother of a King, she was respected a lot by each and everyone. Her orders had same value and importance as the order of the Chhatrapati. The situation was quite opposite during reign of the last Chhatrapati. The Chhatrapati’s mother had to say to Peshwa that there was no one, but the Peshwa. When someone was ill in the family of Chhatrapati, the king had to ask for money to the Peshwa.

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj informed to the Peshwa in a letter which was written on 06 February 1810. “Maaisaheb is not feeling well. You gave one thousand rupees for the medicine through Trimbakaji. The amount is received.”³⁴ Such letters show that what was importance of the Chhatrapati for the Peshwa? During the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the Peshwa was like a firefly in front of the sun. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj had imprisoned the Peshwa. Chhatrapati Rajaram gave a lot of importance to Ramchandrapant Amatya instead of the Peshwa. Same situation was during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji II. In short, the Peshwa didn’t have value in front of the Chhatrapatis during the period of first four Chhatrapatis. The condition completely changed dramatically in the period of last Chhatrapati as well as the last Peshwa. The Chhatrapatis appearance was like the firefly in front of the Sun.

Trimbakji Dengale was the mutalik of the Peshwa in Satara. There was always interference of Trimbakji in the administration as well as in the personal life of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj. He used to dominate the Chhatrapati on the behalf of the Peshwa. Maaisaheb saw one girl for the second marriage of Chhatrapati who was the daughter of Bhikaji Shirke of Satara. She wrote to Bajirao II after the ceremony and gives the details. She wrote, “Trimbakji Dengle also saw the girl.”³⁵ It indicates that the Peshwa and his mutalik interfered in the private life of the Chhatrapati.

That is not only the administrative life but also the private life of Chhatrapati was dominated by the Peshwa. The Peshwa was informed about every incident that took place in Satara in the case of Chhatrapati. Trimbakji Dengale was master at this act as if he had been appointed to give minute detail regarding the private life of the Chhatrapati. Maaisaheb also always

communicated with the Peshwa through correspondence. Once Appasaheb, brother of the Chhatrapati had a threat by an elephant due to the mistake of mahout. The elephant was not sitting down. Appasaheb was finally rescued by controlling the elephant with several attempts. Immediately Maaisaheb wrote to Peshwa on 4 June 1810 and informed, “The mahout must be changed.”³⁶ Such trivial things were also reported to the Peshwa and asked for permission for the minor things.

Chhatrapati's mother had to write to Peshwa for changing the mahout. During the tenure of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj and Peshwa Bajirao II, Chhatrapati's importance and prestige reduced to such an extent that Peshwa's servants did not obey the Chhatrapati. The incident took place in January 1809. Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj was coming to the palace in Satara from the fort and he was sitting in howdah on elephant. ‘*Khawaskhana*’ is a place behind howdah for sitting. Maaisaheb ordered Trimbakji to stand in *Khawaskhana*. He felt inferior to sit behind Chhatrapati in *Khawaskhana*. He openly rejected to sit behind Chhatrapati and said, “I would not sit without the permission of Raya (Bajirao II).”³⁷ Khanderao Shirke was asked to sit behind the king instead of him. Trimbakji was mere an ordinary Mutalik. He directly refused to obey the order of Chhatrapati and said that he would not sit without the permission the Peshwa. He had neither respect nor importance of the order of the Chhatrapati, but had a lot of importance and respect of the orders of Peshwa who was the servant of Chhatrapati.

The Peshwa also imposed restrictions on the education of Chhatrapati. He saw to it that Pratapsinh should not receive good and proper education. The Peshwa thought that if the Chhatrapati got knowledge of administration

through the education, he would control the unrestricted government of Peshwa Bajirao II. The Peshwa was mere a minister of Chhatrapati. He was attendant of the King. The minister imposed restrictions upon the king to acquire knowledge and education. The Peshwa had appointed Kashi Shivram Bendre and Visajipant Keluskar to keep a watch on Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II. They made every attempt to see that the Chhatrapati should not get a teacher to teach Prince Pratapsinh. No teacher was ready to teach the Prince due to the fear of the Peshwa. It is said in Sanskrit that '*vinashkale viparit buddhi*' it means 'as the end draws near, man shows his wickedness'. As the decline of the Peshwa's reign was close, streams of ill thoughts were flowing in the brain of Bajirao II. The injustice and oppression on Chhatrapati reached to its climax.

Anandibai was very brave, courageous, efficient woman. Her name should be mentioned among the great women in the history of Marathas. "The queen mother managed her horse great dexterity. She bore the trance of great beauty; wore a rich dress of embroidned muslin. She did not conceal her face and was both familiar and talkative with such officers as approached her. She had none of that timidity, which one naturally supposed to belong to Hindu ladies. In short, she appeared to be a woman possessed of much natural ability and great presence of mind. She was intelligent and beautiful"³⁸ Though Peshwa conspired to prevent the Chhatrapati from learning, Maaisaheb did not give up her determination. She herself taught Pratapsinh in midnight till early in the morning. The mother of Chhatrapati who taught her child to read and write in the early hours before morning was wise and intelligent.

5.2.3 The Chhatrapati's Struggle for Release

Peshwa Bajirao II's intervention in the administration and private life of Chhatrapati and his mother was increasing day by day. The Peshwa had ruined the reputation and prestige of Chhatrapati's family by putting Chaturising Bhosale in confinement. There are limitations for any actions or emotions, so the patience of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj and Maaisaheb had reached its height. They resolved to overthrow the despotic power of the Peshwa. For them only Elphinston was a ray of hope. "Mountstuart Elphinstone was appointed in 1811 to the important and difficult post of resident at Poona".³⁹ Chhatrapati Pratapsinh decided to take help of Elphinston. It was a tragedy in the history of Maratha that Chhatrapati had to take the help of the British against his own minister Peshwa because of his arbitrary rule. The vital role was played by Rango Bapuji Gupte in getting the help from Elphinston. He was a vatandar from the Maval region. He was in the service of Chhatrapati at Satara.

The royal family members did not have freedom to visit outsiders or new persons. Rango Bapu wanted to release Chhatrapati from the control of Peshwa. It was very important to keep the communication between Chhatrapati and Elphinston as a secret. He worked as a mediator between these parties. Rango Bapu disguised as Gosavi and went to Chhatrapati. The king gave him a letter to give to Elphinston. The killedar suspected Rango Bapu's appearance and behavior while departing from the fort and he arrested him and kept him in prison for two days. He pretended and ensured that he was really a poor Gosavi. The killedar released him after two days. Rango Bapu went to Poona and visited Elphinston. He handed over the letter by Chhatrapati to him. "Thus, Pratapsinh and his mother made secret

approaches to the Resident of Poona requesting his help against Bajirao's wicked plans".⁴⁰ Bajirao II came to know about the secret conspiracy of Chhatrapati and Elphinston. The secret correspondence between the King and Resident was dangerous for Bajirao II. He was trapped between his master and the mighty British. He was completely scared. Again, he used the brain which was full with wicked ideas. He imprisoned the Chhatrapati in the inaccessible fort of Vasota with tight security.⁴¹

5.2.4 The Shameful Act of the Peshwa

The worst behavior of the Peshwa with the Chhatrapati was also one of the reasons of the downfall of the Maratha Empire. The Chhatrapati was that authority whose decision was the final decision, his words were as the law, he was the supreme judge and the Peshwa was only a minister of the king and an attendant of the Swaraj. The previous Peshwas dominated the Chhatrapatis after Shahu I, but didn't humiliate as Bajirao II. He was the first Peshwa in the history of the Marathas who imprisoned the Supreme power of the Maratha Empire i.e. Chhatrapati. The act of the Peshwa spoiled the prestige of the Bhat family and the dignity of the Bhosale dynasty.

5.2.5 Beginning of the Downfall of the Empire

"The Peshwas had made one rule that the chiefs in the Maratha Confederacy the half of the produce of the revenue would be with the chiefs for the maintenance of the army and rest of the produce would be sent to Poona."⁴² According to the rule, the Baroda state had to give a large amount to the Peshwa. The Peshwa was making demand for the amount again and again. There was a lot difference between the amount claimed by the Peshwa and the amount according to the Baroda. So, to settle the dispute with

negotiations, Gangadhar Shastri was sent to Poona under the protection of the British. But there was no result even by staying at Poona. “On 20th July 1815, Gangadharshastri was murdered at Pandharpur where he had gone on pilgrimage at the Peshwa’s invitation.”⁴³

The murder of Gangadharshastri was a huge shock not only for the Gaikwads of Baroda, but also the British as he was sent to Poona under the responsibility of the British Resident at Baroda as well as Poona. The British investigated the conspiracy behind the murder and they got that Trimbakji Dengale was responsible for the murder. Tryambakji Dengale was the trustworthy sardar of Bajirao II. The British asked Bajirao II to hand him over to them. Bajirao II evaded for some days, but finally he handed him over in 1815 AD. But he escaped from their captivity and began to organize the army to fight against the British. There was the Peshwa’s hand behind the acts of Dengale. The British again gave time of one month to hand him over. The Peshwa only pretended as he was after him and didn’t do anything in actual.

The period which was given to Peshwa came to an end. The troops under the leadership of Colonel Smith of East India Company started the movements. “Being helpless, he had to sign a treaty with Company on 13 June 1817.”⁴⁴ It was known as the Treaty of Poona. As per the treaty:

1. The Peshwa should cede the overlordship of the Maratha Empire.
2. He should cede the rights over Ahamadnagar fort and the territories in the North of Narmada River and handover to the British.
3. Peshwa should declare that Trimbakji Dengale was a murderer. “⁴⁵

“Thus, the Maratha confederacy came to be finally and publically dissolved.”⁴⁶ The conditions in the treaty were very insulting. Bajirao II decided to overthrow the dominance of the British and it resulted into the third and final Anglo- Maratha War. He was trying to free himself from the control of the British. He began to convince the Maratha sardars to come together to fight against the British forgetting all the grievances against him. He realized all the mistakes in his career committed by him and he realized the humiliation to the Chhatrapati by him.

5.2.6 The Peshwa’s attempts to Convince the Chhatrapati

The Peshwa tried at his best to convince the Chhatrapati by all possible means for the Maratha state. When Chhatrapati was at Mahuli, Peshwa visited him and persuaded. There he moved the Chhatrapati by respectful attention and entertainment. He had confessed from his bottom of heart that the Chhatrapati was the real head of Maratha state and master of the Peshwa. he expressed his guiltiness for the wrongs that might have been committed by him. He promised that after freeing the Maratha state from the British, he would hand over the reins of administration. He tried to draw the Chhatrapati and Maaisaheb from the influence of Elphinstone and took them in his confidence. He wanted to create an impression on the Maratha sardars that the Chhatrapati of Maratha state will have to struggle against the British. But it was too late for that. Everything escaped from the hand.

5.2.7 Wars between the Peshwa and the British

As soon as the Peshwa left Mahuli, the Chhatrapati sent his Chitnis to Elphinstone and informed about the plans of the Peshwa. Elphinstone was getting all the news about the movements and preparations of the Marathas.

He also started the preparation. On 5 November 1817, a war took place between the Peshwa and the British at Khadki. The battle, however, ended in a draw. After that the Peshwa was defeated by the British in many wars. They defeated him in the battle of Yerwada. They captured Shaniwar Wada. They lowered the Jari Pataka, symbol of the Maratha power, and hoisted the Union Jack, symbol of the British power. The Peshwa, again, was defeated at Koregao on 1 January 1818.

A war took place between the Peshwa and the British at Ashti on 18 February 1818. The battle proved to be very decisive for them, because Bapu Gokhale, the last Senapati of the Peshwa, was killed in the battle. It was the great victory of General Smith. The battle closed all the avenues of defense of the Peshwa. As soon as he got the news of the death of Bapu Gokhale, he escaped from Ashti, but he left the Chhatrapati and his family there itself. “The English captured a quantity of baggage and above all the Raja’s of Satara Pratapsing, with his mother and brother.”⁴⁷

5.2.8. The Defeat of the Peshwa and the Release of the Chhatrapati

Elphinstone was informed about it. He met the Chhatrapati at Balsar on 4 March. Chhatrapati was pleased with the defeat of the Peshwa and visited of Elphinstone. He said about the Chhatrapati, “He was young man of about twenty, good humored and frank and not destitute of intelligence. His mother is a woman of some talent and address a fine and lady, with near fine eyes, has good manners and, it is said, good abilities.”⁴⁸

On 11 February 1818, before the battle of Ashti, Elphinstone had declared a manifesto about the Chhatrapati. According to it, “The Raja of

Satara, who is now a prisoner in Bajeerao's hands will be released and placed at the head of an independent sovereignty of such an extent as may maintain the Raja and his family in comfort and dignity, with this view the fort of Satara has been taken, the Raja's flag has been set up in it and his former ministers have been called into employment. Whatever country is assigned to Raja, will be administrated by him, and he will be bound to establish a system of justice and order. The rest of country will be held by the Honorable Company."⁴⁹

5.2.9 The Chhatrapati in Satara

Elphinstone took the Chhatrapati and his family to Satara. A grand welcome was organized for him. The people celebrated that event with a lot of happiness at Ajinkyatara, capital of Maratha state. The British lowered the *Jari Pataka* and hoisted the Union Jack. Immediately, they lowered the Union Jack and hoisted the *Jari Pataka*. They wanted to tell indirectly through the activity that the administration would be run by the Chhatrapati, but there would be power of the British. Elphinstone appointed Colonel Grant Duff as a Resident in the court of Satara. Grant Duff was the person who wrote a book on the history of Marathas for the first time called 'The History of the Marathas'.

5.2.10 Second Coronation of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj

Elphinstone created a draft for the Chhatrapati. He wanted to give recognition to Pratapsinh as Chhatrapati. It was written in that, "We have released the king from the captivity of the Peshwa. We are placing him on the throne of the state." When the Chhatrapati came to know the draft, he told the British that he was not in the captivity of the Peshwa, but only there

were some disagreements between him and the Peshwa. The Peshwa's conduct was not good for the Maratha state and he did friendship with the British only for the welfare of the subjects. He had already crowned and become the Chhatrapati, so there was no need of coronation again. But Elphinstone was very cunning and clever officer. Finally, he persuaded the Chhatrapati for coronation for one more time. "He was formally installed to the throne on 10th April, 1818 and a proclamation was issued in his name."⁵⁰

An important coincidence is that first Chhatrapati of the Swaraj Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj also was crowned for two times and the last Chhatrapati of the Swaraj Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj also was crowned for two times. In this Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj began to run the administration of the Marathas without the Peshwa. This happened for the first time in the history of the Marathas. "Baji Rao II at last surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on the 3rd June 1818."⁵¹

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj was the last Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire. The dominance of the Peshwas gradually increased since the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and slowly the Chhatrapati became secondary in the administration and they became the nominal head of the Empire. There was the chain of inefficient Chhatrapatis in the Maratha Empire after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The dominance of the Peshwas was also responsible for that to a large extent. If the Chhatrapati had been efficient and powerful, they would not have lived in the captivity of the Peshwas. Due to the lack of the feat and diplomacy and the overall excellent performance of the Peshwas, the office of the Chhatrapati became a decorative ornament.

The Peshwas became very dominant since the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, so the Chhatrapati from Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj to Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj had to bear the humiliation by their own ministers. The Peshwas gradually became free from the Chhatrapati's domination and supremacy and became the supreme head of the Maratha administration. Various wrong rules and customs were introduced in the vast political journey of the Maratha administration due to the negligence towards the philosophy and policies of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. To make the office of the Peshwa hereditary, to accompany the families during the expeditions etc, rules were followed. Though the Peshwas transformed the Maratha kingdom into an Empire, they could not keep the Empire intact for a long period. For this the humiliation of the Chhatrapatis by them, no respect for the office of the Chhatrapati etc. were responsible. That's why though the rise of the Peshwas was as phoenix bird, the downfall was unfortunate. The Peshwas tried to cut down the same ladder from which the Peshwa entered in the politics and prospered. Such a kind of role of the Peshwas caused for their downfall and finally the Maratha Empire came to an end in 1818 AD.

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Chapter VI

Conclusion

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Conclusion

"History is a narrative what civilized men have thought or done in past time" says Will Durant. 'The role of Chhatrapati's in the Peshwa Administration: A study (1713 AD -1818 AD)' is an analytic study. In this research, published and non-published sources have been analyzed and studied. In this regard, meetings and discussions are carried out with scholars and historians for meaningful analyses of the role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa administration.

In monarchy, whole power is vested at the king. King is Sovereign. Sovereign means one who is not controlled by any other ruler or power. The political situation can be seen during the era of Shiv i.e. between 1630-1707. Following the tradition of Indian monarchy, Shivaji Maharaj was also coronated himself and bore title of 'Chhatrapati'.

In Shivkal i.e. in the reign of first four Chhatrapatis, one can see that the Chhatrapatis were sovereign. Like the Mauryas, the Guptas, the rulers of Vijaynagar, the first six Mughal emperors etc. The Chhatrapatis were too at supreme office of administration governance. In judicial system too, Chhatrapatis were last and final judge. The judgment of Chhatrapati was accepted as the final judgment. Each and every word of Chhatrapati was worth as a law. All appointments of important administrative offices, changes in offices, promotions, dismissals, etc. were enjoyed by the Chhatrapatis only. For each high post in administration one had to receive the robes from the Chhatrapatis. The Chhatrapatis were supremo of Swaraj. On the seals of each minister and other sardars the name was inscribed and it symbolized the awe of Chhatrapati in the administration.

In Shivkal, all four Chhatrapatis offered administrative offices on the basis of competency of the candidate. They didn't follow the principles like hereditary office or nepotism in the administration. In Shiv Era for any office there was an only criterion that was competency and dutifulness of the person. This was strictly implemented, because the orders of the Chhatrapati were as the law. The words of the Chhatrapatis were worth to governance. According to the efficiency and the competency of the sardar, initially the sardars from the Pingle family were appointed in the office of the Peshwa was. After Moropant Pingle, the robes of Peshwaship were offered to his elder son Nilopant. After him, the office of the Peshwa was offered to his brother Bahiropant. In Shivkal, the office of Peshwa was unknowingly allotted in the Pingle family hereditary. Of course, they were appointed because of their competency. Along with the competency, dutifulness was also considered.

In Shivkal, all were equal in front of the law. Peshwa Moropant Pingle conspired against Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and due to his conspiracy Chhatrapati imprisoned the Peshwa. Powerful General like Santaji Ghorpade was dismissed by Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj as Santaji failed to serve flawlessly. Summing up, Chhatrapatis were supreme and important in the administration, so administration was moving around the Chhatrapatis.

During 1707 AD to 1749 AD, one can see a change in the administration. In the Peshwa era i.e. from 1713 to 1818 the office of the Peshwa, which was as important as other ministers during Shivkal, became a very important. In Shivkal, Chhatrapati was supreme head in the administration. But during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj the Peshwas also became as important as the Chhatrapati in the

administration. Because of the competency of the persons from the Bhat family, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed the three generations from the Bhat family. Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao I and Balaji Bajirao proved the trust of Chhatrapati by proving their mettle. Due to this, Chhatrapati gave a bit relaxation to take decision to those Peshwas in the administration. Though the freedom of decision making was given, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had total command over the administration. The decision of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the final decision. The Peshwas were also loyal to the Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj secured sovereignty of the Chhatrapati. He admired and appreciated Peshwas and other sardars whenever they showed and proved their mettle and also scolded, if they committed any mistake or wrong deeds.

The final decisions related to appointments of Peshwa and other offices were with the Chhatrapati. For vivid offices, one had to accept the robes from the Chhatrapati. The Peshwas and other sardars were inscribing name of the Chhatrapatis on their seals before their name. First three Peshwas transformed Maratha state into the Maratha Empire with the power of their competency and feat. The whole credit goes to the first three Peshwas from the Bhat family and, of course, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. If Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had not been the king, the history would have been different or the Maratha state would have lasted, but expansion of Maratha state, like during his reign, would not have occurred. With the high-level administrative skills and leadership, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj maintained his supremacy over the administration. Like a jeweler who knows the value of a diamond, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj offered office of Peshwa to the personals from the Bhat family acknowledging their warrior-like quality and leadership skill also gave them authority of decision-making. Chhatrapati

Shahu Maharaj properly used leadership quality of the Peshwas. Initially, three Peshwas from the Bhat family increased the importance of the office of Peshwa on the strength of their competency in such a way that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj offered them prominence and leadership of Maratha Confederacy. During that period, compared with the other powerful sardars, the three Peshwas were more loyal to the Chhatrapati and the central power. They showed their loyalty and bravery, efficiency and feat to such an extent that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj handed over the whole responsibility of the Maratha Confederacy to the Peshwas in the Bhat family, but the decision caused to wane off the importance of the Chhatrapatis in the administration.

After Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (1749-1818), the role of Chhatrapatis was totally changed in the administration. In Shivkal, Chhatrapati was a supreme administrative office. All the offices in the Ashtpradhan including Peshwa were next to Chhatrapati in importance.

During the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, though the Chhatrapati was head of the administration, the office of Peshwa also gradually got the importance as equal to the Chhatrapati in the administration. After Shahu Maharaj, from the time of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, the Peshwas became more important than the Chhatrapatis. The Chhatrapatis became the nominal head, whereas Peshwas became de facto head of the empire. It resulted in the total change in the role of Chhatrapati in the administration. There are two causes which seem to be responsible for it. One is superb administrative skills of Nanasaheb Peshwa and second is the desire of Tarabai to enjoy the power.

There was no doubt that Tarabai was very much ambitious and excellent ruler. But along with these qualities, she had a strong desire to enjoy the power. Due to it, she was trying to exercise the power during the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. She was trying to dominate Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. When she observed that Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was overcoming her efforts, she blamed that Ramraja was a fake and did not belong to the Bhosale dynasty and imprisoned him. It was a shameful incident in the history of Marathas. Nanasaheb was dominating all over Hindustan with his excellent leadership and at the same time in Satara, Tarabai was accusing Chhatrapati that he was a fake. Naturally this confusion diminished respect for the Chhatrapati not only by the sardars in Satara but also by the entire Maratha Confederacy and helped to increase the respect for Peshwa Balaji Bajirao.

Tarabai began her efforts to remove Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and to coronate Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur as the new Chhatrapati. It means that Maharani Tarabai began to humiliate the throne of Chhatrapati. She herself devalued the office of the Chhatrapati. She was also quite responsible for diminishing the importance of Chhatrapati along with being nominal.

Not only leadership of Nanasaheb and desire of Tarabai but also inefficiency of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was responsible for being a nominal head. The dominance of the Chhatrapatis from the Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj declined totally in the administration. Though Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was not dominant, he was honoured and respected till the time of Peshwa Madhavrao I.

There was conspiracy against Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj by Tarabai right from his coronation. But after the death of Tarabai, from

1761 C.E. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had opportunity to prove his bravery, efficiency and his dominance. In fact, it was possible when Tarabai was alive too. When we study the life of Chhatrapatis before Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, it is seen that they founded, expanded, protected and secured the Swaraj while facing a lot of problems and obstacles.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had not got the throne from his ancestors. With the divine gift of excellent leadership, Shivaji Maharaj erected the world from scratch, erected state from scratch and changed the history of South India in such a way that it will not be forgotten till thousands of years. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj too had to face civil strife for the throne. Even after that, facing internal and external foes, he created his own unique image in the history. Residing at Jinji, 'stable minded' and soft hearted Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj fought with a powerful enemy Aurangzeb. After him, despite being a woman, Tarabai forced Aurangzeb to accept the defeat at least by heart.

The condition of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was quite different among all the above Chhatrapatis. He was out of Swaraj for eighteen years. He had to prove himself that he was the grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Still he demonstrated a good skill and smartness while fetching people to his side from Tarabai's side. With his excellent skills, he converted the Maratha Swaraj into the Maratha Empire.

There were many problems before the above all stated Chhatrapatis. But they protected Swaraj and secured the importance of the office of Chhatrapati while facing those problems. The moves of Tarabai were also like a problem in front of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. Former

Chhatrapatis faced the external aggressions and secured the state. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had to face only enemies from his own family. He could not defeat them too. He himself failed somewhere. These problems were not like Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire, Nizam, etc which were before of earlier Chhatrapatis.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj brought together the *mavales* from Konkan and Desh together and founded Hindavi Swaraj. In the beginning, he didn't have a large army, weapons, arsenals etc. If Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had decided, not only in Satara, but the sardars in the entire Maratha Confederacy would have supported and helped him, because those sardars had a lot of respect for the Chhatrapati and the throne of Satara. Humayun, the Mughal emperor, was in exile for fifteen years. In 1555, He regained the lost rule of Mughals and the empire lasted till 1857AD. Chandragupta Maurya defeated powerful Dhananada and founded the Maurya dynasty.

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had efficiency, but he never used it. Chandragupta Maurya, Humayun, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj etc. did not wait for an opportunity. In fact, they created opportunity on their own. Overall, the inefficiency and the political and administrative weakness of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj were responsible for the Chhatrapati being a nominal head. The Peshwas became so important in the administration that they dominated the Chhatrapatis and as a result the Chhatrapatis had to live as a captive of the Peshwa.

The rights and the authorities of the Chhatrapatis were not in existent. There was total control of the Peshwas over the expenditure of the Chhatrapatis. The only function of the Chhatrapatis was to give robes of the various offices, but as per the recommendation of the Peshwas. It is

said that the one gets property with inheritance, but the accomplishment has to be proven. The same case was with Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He got the vast empire with inheritance, but he could not show his accomplishment. That is why the Peshwa became dominant and Chhatrapatis had to be nominal the head.

The condition of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was same as Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He also had to live as in captivity for his entire career. There was control on his expenditure. During the reign of Sawai Madhavrao i.e. Nana Fadnis there were a lot of restrictions on the Chhatrapati. The office of the Chhatrapati was only in name. For the appointments of different offices, the formal consent of the Chhatrapati was required. There was the name of Chhatrapati on the seal of sardars before their names.

During the reign of Bajirao II, there were a lot of restrictions on the expenditure and private life of Chhatrapatis than the earlier. There were restrictions on the education also. He did not leave a single chance to humiliate the Chhatrapati. The political weakness of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was also responsible to some extent to be the office of the Chhatrapati nominal. His brother Chaturising Raje Bhosale revolted against the uncontrolled rule of Bajirao II. He tried to seek the help of different kings in Hindustan to regain the lost dignity and power of Chhatrapati. But the luck was not in his favour. If Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had adopted Chaturising Raje Bhosale instead of Shahu II, the Chhatrapati would have regained the power as phoenix bird. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II could not show the courage even to support to his brother. Though there was the control of Bajirao II on Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, the power to give robes of different offices was with the Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj and his mother Anandibai tried to regain the prestige and power of the Chhatrapati, but it was too late. Their power was very weak in front of the powerful British whose rule was all most all over the world. But Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj showed his courage to seek the help of the powerful British against his own minister.

There are many examples in the history that the ministers took the advantage of weak kings and established their own power. Pushyamitra Shunga, a senapati of Maurya Empire, assassinated Brihadrath, the last ruler of the Maurya dynasty and founded the power of Shunga dynasty. After Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, the Peshwas became de facto ruler of the Maratha Empire. All the administrative affairs were in their hands. If they had decided, they could have established the rule of the Bhat family. But they never thought to destroy the power of the rule of the Chhatrapati, because the Bhosales of Nagpur, the Gaikwads of Baroda, the Holkars of Indore, Bhosales of Akkalkot, the Shindes of Gwalior and many sardars in the Maratha Confederacy were together only because of the Chhatrapati. If the Peshwas had established the rule of the Bhat family by destroying the rule of Chhatrapati, the sardars in the Maratha Confederacy would have destroyed the rule of the Bhat family all together. That's why though the Peshwas were enjoying and managing all the affairs of the Maratha administration, they were showing that they were the servants of the Chhatrapati only for the sardars in the Maratha Confederacy.

The same case was with the Sayyid Brothers in the court of the Mughals. They dominated the Mughal court and became the kingmakers, but never tried to become the king as all the sardars were together only because of the Mughals. The Bhat family kept the promise committed by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Chhatrapati Shahu

Maharaj had ordered to manage the affairs of the Maratha Confederacy and follow the orders of the Chhatrapatis.

The office of the Chhatrapati after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was like the office of the President in Republic of India. The President of India is the constitutional head of the country and it is the highest office, but he is the nominal head of the country. No bill can be the law without the signature of the President. The real head of the country is the Prime Minister. All the decisions are taken by the Prime Minister, but to implement it the formal consent and the signature of the President is required. The President gives the oath to the leader of majority party as a Prime Minister as well as other ministers after the general election. Without taking oath by the President the person cannot be appointed in the office of the Prime Minister.

The same case was with the Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Era. The Chhatrapatis were as the President of India and the Peshwas were as the Prime Minister. The Chhatrapatis used to appoint the Peshwa. Instead of the oath ceremony, the Chhatrapatis used to give the robes of the Peshwaship. The person was recognized as a Peshwa, only if he received the robes of the Peshwa from the Chhatrapati. The other ministers in Ashtpradhan had to receive the robes of the offices from the Chhatrapati. Though the President of India doesn't take decisions on his own, a person cannot be appointed in the office of the Prime Minister without his formal consent. In the same way though the Chhatrapati, after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, didn't have any political or administrative power, there was no importance to the office without receiving the robes from the Chhatrapati. The importance of the Chhatrapati to receive the robes can be seen through the appointments of Raghunathrao, Sawai Madhavrao, Chimnaji Madhavrao and Bajirao Raghunathrao in the office of the Peshwa.

Everyone was trying to receive the robes of the office by taking the Chhatrapatis in their confidence.

The office of the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa dominated the history of the Marathas. Both the sides of a coin are important and have the same value. If any one of the sides is not printed, the value of the coin is zero. In the same way the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa have the unique importance. Both the offices were dependent on each other. It is the short research to study what was the role of the Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa administration, the following conclusions were drawn after the study of 'The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)

1. The Chhatrapatis were sovereign in the Shiv Era (1674 AD to 1713 AD)
2. The advice of the ministers in the Ashtpradhan was not mandatory to the Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era, while it was compulsory for the ministers to respect and follow the orders of the Chhatrapatis.
3. The Peshwas were following the orders of the Chhatrapatis like other ministers in the Ashtpradhan.
4. Other ministers had more importance than the Peshwa in the Shiv Era. When Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was in Jinji, he had handed over the responsibility of the Swaraj to Ramchandrapant Amatya, not to the Peshwa.
5. During the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Kavi Kalash was dominated the administration, though he was not the member of the Ashtpradhan. The Chhatrapati introduced the office of the 'Chhandogamatya' only for Kavi Kalasha.
6. The Chhatrapatis supremacy was in such way that the Peshwas and other ministers were less important in front of the Chhatrapatis.

7. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj took note of the loyalty and the contribution of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in his early days, so to express his gratitude towards Balaji Vishwanath he appointed Bajirao I, son of Balaji Vishwanath in the office of the Peshwa.
8. The office of Peshwa got a lot of importance during the reign of Balaji Vishwanath because of his accomplishments and the administrative skills. The rights of the Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi and the release of Maharani Yesubai were the reasons to increase the importance of the office.
9. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj sowed the seeds to appoint the Peshwa from Bhat family by appointing Bajirao I in the office of the Peshwa.
10. The office of the Peshwa got a lot importance during the reign of Bajirao II as he extended the Maratha power in North.
11. The decision of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was courageous to appoint Balaji Bajirao in the office of Peshwa despite the opposition by the courtesans.
12. Balaji Bajirao also proved his efficiency as his father and grandfather and contributed in transforming the kingdom into the Maratha Empire.
13. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj controlled first three Peshwas from the Bhat family with his strong leadership, excellent decisions and the presence of mind and used their skills to strengthen the Maratha Empire.
14. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had secured the sovereignty and the central power and controlled the powerful Peshwas.
15. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had warned strictly the Peshwas to remove from the office, if they neglected the order of the Chhatrapati and proved inefficiency in their duty.

16. There was the complete control of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj over the three Peshwas, that's why those three Peshwas were loyal to the central power, followed the orders and gave detailed information about every expedition to the Chhatrapati.
17. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was busy in the disputes in his family in his last years of life due to the inheritance issue, so he could not pay attention towards the administration.
18. There was a lot of chaos in Satara due to the inheritance issue during the period of Balaji Bajirao and he took the advantage of the instability in Satara and created his dominance.
19. The first three Peshwas from the Bhat family proved their accomplishment without losing a single battle and expedition. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was not sure about the bravery, efficiency and accomplishment of his successor, so he took a revolutionary decision and handed over the responsibility of the Maratha Confederacy to the Peshwas.
20. Though he gave right to the Peshwa to manage the affairs of the Maratha Confederacy, he didn't let to downplay the importance and the authority of the office of the Chhatrapati. He ordered the Peshwa to follow and respect the command of the Chhatrapati.
21. Maharani Tarabai, for her lust to enjoy the power, accused Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj of being a fake and imprisoned him. It was a shameful act and it caused to downplay the prestige of the throne of the Chhatrapati. Maharani Tarabai was responsible for this to some extent.
22. The respect for the Chhatrapati waned off gradually in the hearts of the Maratha sardars as the Chhatrapati was imprisoned due to the internal disputes.

23. The civil disputes between Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai proved to be beneficial for Peshwa. When Maharani Tarabai and Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj were busy in civil disputes, Peshwa Balaji Bajirao established his dominance all over India and in the Maratha administration with his bravery and diplomacy.
24. Due to the internal disputes in the Maratha power, the Chhatrapati gradually became the nominal and the Peshwa the head of the administration.
25. The inefficiency of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was also responsible for the Chhatrapati being a nominal head along with the lust of power of Maharani Tarabai.
26. It was the authority of the Chhatrapati to appoint the Peshwa, but at the time of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, Maharani Tarabai wrote a letter to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao to make Chhatrapati to Ramraja. It shows the importance of the office of the Peshwa and inferiority of the office of the Chhatrapati.
27. The successors of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj were weak in the administration, so the powerful Peshwas became head of the administration.
28. The function of the Chhatrapatis was only to give the robes of the office of Peshwa and the other officials.
29. Because of the charter by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and the accomplishment of the Peshwa, the office of the Peshwa became hereditary in the Bhat family.
30. The office of the Peshwa got importance to such an extent that the sardars in Poona prayed to the Gods and Goddesses all over India and performed *hom-havan* for Gangabai, wife of Narayanro Peshwa, to have a son.

31. The office of the Peshwa should be only from the Bhat family so, Sawai Madhavarao was given the robes of the Peshwaship on the fortieth day of his birth.
32. It was mandatory to be present in the court of Satara to receive the robes of Peshwaship. But Raghunathrao broke the rule and sent a clerk to bring the robes. In this way he humiliated the throne of Chhatrapati and the rule in the administration of the Maratha.
33. Due to the administrative weakness of the Chhatrapatis, the Peshwas controlled not only the administration, but also the expenditure of their masters.
34. All the Maratha sardars had a lot of respect for the Chhatrapatis. Though the successors of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had become the nominal head of the administration, the chiefs of the Maratha Confederacy felt that to rule in the name of the Chhatrapatis was their prime duty.
35. Though the responsibility of the administration was handed over to the Peshwas after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, all the affairs were managed in the name of the Chhatrapati and formal consent was received for the appointments of the various offices.
36. There was the name of the Chhatrapati on the seal of all the ministers as per the traditions, but at the same time there was no power in the hand of Chhatrapati as per the traditions.
37. The chiefs in the Maratha Confederacy acted as independent ruler in their respective territories as the central power had become nominal, but they were together only because of the Chhatrapati.
38. The Chhatrapati was the symbol of the unity of the Maratha Empire.

39. The office of the Chhatrapati had a lot of importance that's why Robert Clive supported Janoji Bhosale in his attempts to become the Chhatrapati.
40. Because of the strict policies of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, his role was of a sovereign ruler in the administration. But due to the enfeeblement of his successors in the administration and the accomplishment of the Peshwas, the central power became nominal.
41. The negligence of the Chhatrapatis towards the administration and the policy to be dependent upon the Peshwa resulted changes in the administration and the name and fame of the Peshwa gradually increased in the administration of the Marathas.

Suggestive Measurement

1. The contribution of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj in the history of Marathas like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai, so, it is important and necessary to acknowledge of his contribution.
2. It is necessary to research and write by the researchers and historians about the life and achievement of Chhatursing Bhosale, brother of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, who struggled throughout his life to regain the lost prestige, dignity and power of the Chhatrapati.
3. Sometimes, the history also forgets to take a note of accomplished persons. One of the brave and diplomatic personalities was Anandibai, mother of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj. It is necessary to research on her life in the last phase of the history of Maratha Empire.

4. There were a lot limitations came across while studying the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj due to the limitations of availability of reference books. So, more research should be done on the both of Chhatrapati. It will help in the future to study more on their life.

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**‘The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration’:
A Study
(1713 AD to 1818 AD)**



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Chapter VI

Conclusion

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"History is a narrative what civilized men have thought or done in past time" says Will Durant. 'The role of Chhatrapati's in the Peshwa Administration: A study (1713 AD -1818 AD)' is an analytic study. In this research, published and non-published sources have been analyzed and studied. In this regard, meetings and discussions are carried out with scholars and historians for meaningful analyses of the role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa administration.

In monarchy, whole power is vested at the king. King is Sovereign. Sovereign means one who is not controlled by any other ruler or power. The political situation can be seen during the era of Shiv i.e. between 1630-1707. Following the tradition of Indian monarchy, Shivaji Maharaj was also coronated himself and bore title of 'Chhatrapati'.

In Shivkal i.e. in the reign of first four Chhatrapatis, one can see that the Chhatrapatis were sovereign. Like the Mauryas, the Guptas, the rulers of Vijaynagar, the first six Mughal emperors etc. The Chhatrapatis were too at supreme office of administration governance. In judicial system too, Chhatrapatis were last and final judge. The judgment of Chhatrapati was accepted as the final judgment. Each and every word of Chhatrapati was worth as a law. All appointments of important administrative offices, changes in offices, promotions, dismissals, etc. were enjoyed by the Chhatrapatis only. For each high post in administration one had to receive the robes from the Chhatrapatis. The Chhatrapatis were supremo of Swaraj. On the seals of each minister and other sardars the name was inscribed and it symbolized the awe of Chhatrapati in the administration.

In Shivkal, all four Chhatrapatis offered administrative offices on the basis of competency of the candidate. They didn't follow the principles like hereditary office or nepotism in the administration. In Shiv Era for any office there was an only criterion that was competency and dutifulness of the person. This was strictly implemented, because the orders of the Chhatrapati were as the law. The words of the Chhatrapatis were worth to governance. According to the efficiency and the competency of the sardar, initially the sardars from the Pingle family were appointed in the office of the Peshwa was. After Moropant Pingle, the robes of Peshwaship were offered to his elder son Nilopant. After him, the office of the Peshwa was offered to his brother Bahiropant. In Shivkal, the office of Peshwa was unknowingly allotted in the Pingle family hereditary. Of course, they were appointed because of their competency. Along with the competency, dutifulness was also considered.

In Shivkal, all were equal in front of the law. Peshwa Moropant Pingle conspired against Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and due to his conspiracy Chhatrapati imprisoned the Peshwa. Powerful General like Santaji Ghorpade was dismissed by Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj as Santaji failed to serve flawlessly. Summing up, Chhatrapatis were supreme and important in the administration, so administration was moving around the Chhatrapatis.

During 1707 AD to 1749 AD, one can see a change in the administration. In the Peshwa era i.e. from 1713 to 1818 the office of the Peshwa, which was as important as other ministers during Shivkal, became a very important. In Shivkal, Chhatrapati was supreme head in the administration. But during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj the Peshwas also became as important as the Chhatrapati in the

administration. Because of the competency of the persons from the Bhat family, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed the three generations from the Bhat family. Balaji Vishwanath, Bajirao I and Balaji Bajirao proved the trust of Chhatrapati by proving their mettle. Due to this, Chhatrapati gave a bit relaxation to take decision to those Peshwas in the administration. Though the freedom of decision making was given, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had total command over the administration. The decision of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the final decision. The Peshwas were also loyal to the Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj secured sovereignty of the Chhatrapati. He admired and appreciated Peshwas and other sardars whenever they showed and proved their mettle and also scolded, if they committed any mistake or wrong deeds.

The final decisions related to appointments of Peshwa and other offices were with the Chhatrapati. For vivid offices, one had to accept the robes from the Chhatrapati. The Peshwas and other sardars were inscribing name of the Chhatrapatis on their seals before their name. First three Peshwas transformed Maratha state into the Maratha Empire with the power of their competency and feat. The whole credit goes to the first three Peshwas from the Bhat family and, of course, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. If Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had not been the king, the history would have been different or the Maratha state would have lasted, but expansion of Maratha state, like during his reign, would not have occurred. With the high-level administrative skills and leadership, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj maintained his supremacy over the administration. Like a jeweler who knows the value of a diamond, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj offered office of Peshwa to the personals from the Bhat family acknowledging their warrior-like quality and leadership skill also gave them authority of decision-making. Chhatrapati

Shahu Maharaj properly used leadership quality of the Peshwas. Initially, three Peshwas from the Bhat family increased the importance of the office of Peshwa on the strength of their competency in such a way that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj offered them prominence and leadership of Maratha Confederacy. During that period, compared with the other powerful sardars, the three Peshwas were more loyal to the Chhatrapati and the central power. They showed their loyalty and bravery, efficiency and feat to such an extent that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj handed over the whole responsibility of the Maratha Confederacy to the Peshwas in the Bhat family, but the decision caused to wane off the importance of the Chhatrapatis in the administration.

After Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (1749-1818), the role of Chhatrapatis was totally changed in the administration. In Shivkal, Chhatrapati was a supreme administrative office. All the offices in the Ashtpradhan including Peshwa were next to Chhatrapati in importance.

During the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, though the Chhatrapati was head of the administration, the office of Peshwa also gradually got the importance as equal to the Chhatrapati in the administration. After Shahu Maharaj, from the time of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, the Peshwas became more important than the Chhatrapatis. The Chhatrapatis became the nominal head, whereas Peshwas became de facto head of the empire. It resulted in the total change in the role of Chhatrapati in the administration. There are two causes which seem to be responsible for it. One is superb administrative skills of Nanasaheb Peshwa and second is the desire of Tarabai to enjoy the power.

There was no doubt that Tarabai was very much ambitious and excellent ruler. But along with these qualities, she had a strong desire to enjoy the power. Due to it, she was trying to exercise the power during the reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. She was trying to dominate Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. When she observed that Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was overcoming her efforts, she blamed that Ramraja was a fake and did not belong to the Bhosale dynasty and imprisoned him. It was a shameful incident in the history of Marathas. Nanasaheb was dominating all over Hindustan with his excellent leadership and at the same time in Satara, Tarabai was accusing Chhatrapati that he was a fake. Naturally this confusion diminished respect for the Chhatrapati not only by the sardars in Satara but also by the entire Maratha Confederacy and helped to increase the respect for Peshwa Balaji Bajirao.

Tarabai began her efforts to remove Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and to coronate Sambhaji Maharaj of Kolhapur as the new Chhatrapati. It means that Maharani Tarabai began to humiliate the throne of Chhatrapati. She herself devalued the office of the Chhatrapati. She was also quite responsible for diminishing the importance of Chhatrapati along with being nominal.

Not only leadership of Nanasaheb and desire of Tarabai but also inefficiency of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was responsible for being a nominal head. The dominance of the Chhatrapatis from the Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj declined totally in the administration. Though Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was not dominant, he was honoured and respected till the time of Peshwa Madhavrao I.

There was conspiracy against Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj by Tarabai right from his coronation. But after the death of Tarabai, from

1761 C.E. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had opportunity to prove his bravery, efficiency and his dominance. In fact, it was possible when Tarabai was alive too. When we study the life of Chhatrapatis before Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, it is seen that they founded, expanded, protected and secured the Swaraj while facing a lot of problems and obstacles.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had not got the throne from his ancestors. With the divine gift of excellent leadership, Shivaji Maharaj erected the world from scratch, erected state from scratch and changed the history of South India in such a way that it will not be forgotten till thousands of years. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj too had to face civil strife for the throne. Even after that, facing internal and external foes, he created his own unique image in the history. Residing at Jinji, 'stable minded' and soft hearted Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj fought with a powerful enemy Aurangzeb. After him, despite being a woman, Tarabai forced Aurangzeb to accept the defeat at least by heart.

The condition of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was quite different among all the above Chhatrapatis. He was out of Swaraj for eighteen years. He had to prove himself that he was the grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Still he demonstrated a good skill and smartness while fetching people to his side from Tarabai's side. With his excellent skills, he converted the Maratha Swaraj into the Maratha Empire.

There were many problems before the above all stated Chhatrapatis. But they protected Swaraj and secured the importance of the office of Chhatrapati while facing those problems. The moves of Tarabai were also like a problem in front of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. Former

Chhatrapatis faced the external aggressions and secured the state. Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had to face only enemies from his own family. He could not defeat them too. He himself failed somewhere. These problems were not like Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire, Nizam, etc which were before of earlier Chhatrapatis.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj brought together the *mavales* from Konkan and Desh together and founded Hindavi Swaraj. In the beginning, he didn't have a large army, weapons, arsenals etc. If Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had decided, not only in Satara, but the sardars in the entire Maratha Confederacy would have supported and helped him, because those sardars had a lot of respect for the Chhatrapati and the throne of Satara. Humayun, the Mughal emperor, was in exile for fifteen years. In 1555, He regained the lost rule of Mughals and the empire lasted till 1857AD. Chandragupta Maurya defeated powerful Dhananada and founded the Maurya dynasty.

Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had efficiency, but he never used it. Chandragupta Maurya, Humayun, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj etc. did not wait for an opportunity. In fact, they created opportunity on their own. Overall, the inefficiency and the political and administrative weakness of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj were responsible for the Chhatrapati being a nominal head. The Peshwas became so important in the administration that they dominated the Chhatrapatis and as a result the Chhatrapatis had to live as a captive of the Peshwa.

The rights and the authorities of the Chhatrapatis were not in existent. There was total control of the Peshwas over the expenditure of the Chhatrapatis. The only function of the Chhatrapatis was to give robes of the various offices, but as per the recommendation of the Peshwas. It is

said that the one gets property with inheritance, but the accomplishment has to be proven. The same case was with Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He got the vast empire with inheritance, but he could not show his accomplishment. That is why the Peshwa became dominant and Chhatrapatis had to be nominal the head.

The condition of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was same as Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj. He also had to live as in captivity for his entire career. There was control on his expenditure. During the reign of Sawai Madhavrao i.e. Nana Fadnis there were a lot of restrictions on the Chhatrapati. The office of the Chhatrapati was only in name. For the appointments of different offices, the formal consent of the Chhatrapati was required. There was the name of Chhatrapati on the seal of sardars before their names.

During the reign of Bajirao II, there were a lot of restrictions on the expenditure and private life of Chhatrapatis than the earlier. There were restrictions on the education also. He did not leave a single chance to humiliate the Chhatrapati. The political weakness of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II was also responsible to some extent to be the office of the Chhatrapati nominal. His brother Chaturising Raje Bhosale revolted against the uncontrolled rule of Bajirao II. He tried to seek the help of different kings in Hindustan to regain the lost dignity and power of Chhatrapati. But the luck was not in his favour. If Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj had adopted Chaturising Raje Bhosale instead of Shahu II, the Chhatrapati would have regained the power as phoenix bird. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II could not show the courage even to support to his brother. Though there was the control of Bajirao II on Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, the power to give robes of different offices was with the Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj and his mother Anandibai tried to regain the prestige and power of the Chhatrapati, but it was too late. Their power was very weak in front of the powerful British whose rule was all most all over the world. But Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj showed his courage to seek the help of the powerful British against his own minister.

There are many examples in the history that the ministers took the advantage of weak kings and established their own power. Pushyamitra Shunga, a senapati of Maurya Empire, assassinated Brihadrath, the last ruler of the Maurya dynasty and founded the power of Shunga dynasty. After Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, the Peshwas became de facto ruler of the Maratha Empire. All the administrative affairs were in their hands. If they had decided, they could have established the rule of the Bhat family. But they never thought to destroy the power of the rule of the Chhatrapati, because the Bhosales of Nagpur, the Gaikwads of Baroda, the Holkars of Indore, Bhosales of Akkalkot, the Shindes of Gwalior and many sardars in the Maratha Confederacy were together only because of the Chhatrapati. If the Peshwas had established the rule of the Bhat family by destroying the rule of Chhatrapati, the sardars in the Maratha Confederacy would have destroyed the rule of the Bhat family all together. That's why though the Peshwas were enjoying and managing all the affairs of the Maratha administration, they were showing that they were the servants of the Chhatrapati only for the sardars in the Maratha Confederacy.

The same case was with the Sayyid Brothers in the court of the Mughals. They dominated the Mughal court and became the kingmakers, but never tried to become the king as all the sardars were together only because of the Mughals. The Bhat family kept the promise committed by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Chhatrapati Shahu

Maharaj had ordered to manage the affairs of the Maratha Confederacy and follow the orders of the Chhatrapatis.

The office of the Chhatrapati after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was like the office of the President in Republic of India. The President of India is the constitutional head of the country and it is the highest office, but he is the nominal head of the country. No bill can be the law without the signature of the President. The real head of the country is the Prime Minister. All the decisions are taken by the Prime Minister, but to implement it the formal consent and the signature of the President is required. The President gives the oath to the leader of majority party as a Prime Minister as well as other ministers after the general election. Without taking oath by the President the person cannot be appointed in the office of the Prime Minister.

The same case was with the Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Era. The Chhatrapatis were as the President of India and the Peshwas were as the Prime Minister. The Chhatrapatis used to appoint the Peshwa. Instead of the oath ceremony, the Chhatrapatis used to give the robes of the Peshwaship. The person was recognized as a Peshwa, only if he received the robes of the Peshwa from the Chhatrapati. The other ministers in Ashtpradhan had to receive the robes of the offices from the Chhatrapati. Though the President of India doesn't take decisions on his own, a person cannot be appointed in the office of the Prime Minister without his formal consent. In the same way though the Chhatrapati, after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj I, didn't have any political or administrative power, there was no importance to the office without receiving the robes from the Chhatrapati. The importance of the Chhatrapati to receive the robes can be seen through the appointments of Raghunathrao, Sawai Madhavrao, Chimnaji Madhavrao and Bajirao Raghunathrao in the office of the Peshwa.

Everyone was trying to receive the robes of the office by taking the Chhatrapatis in their confidence.

The office of the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa dominated the history of the Marathas. Both the sides of a coin are important and have the same value. If any one of the sides is not printed, the value of the coin is zero. In the same way the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa have the unique importance. Both the offices were dependent on each other. It is the short research to study what was the role of the Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa administration, the following conclusions were drawn after the study of 'The Role of Chhatrapatis in the Peshwa Administration: A Study (1713 AD to 1818 AD)

1. The Chhatrapatis were sovereign in the Shiv Era (1674 AD to 1713 AD)
2. The advice of the ministers in the Ashtpradhan was not mandatory to the Chhatrapatis in the Shiv Era, while it was compulsory for the ministers to respect and follow the orders of the Chhatrapatis.
3. The Peshwas were following the orders of the Chhatrapatis like other ministers in the Ashtpradhan.
4. Other ministers had more importance than the Peshwa in the Shiv Era. When Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj was in Jinji, he had handed over the responsibility of the Swaraj to Ramchandrapant Amatya, not to the Peshwa.
5. During the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Kavi Kalash was dominated the administration, though he was not the member of the Ashtpradhan. The Chhatrapati introduced the office of the 'Chhandogamatya' only for Kavi Kalasha.
6. The Chhatrapatis supremacy was in such way that the Peshwas and other ministers were less important in front of the Chhatrapatis.

7. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj took note of the loyalty and the contribution of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in his early days, so to express his gratitude towards Balaji Vishwanath he appointed Bajirao I, son of Balaji Vishwanath in the office of the Peshwa.
8. The office of Peshwa got a lot of importance during the reign of Balaji Vishwanath because of his accomplishments and the administrative skills. The rights of the Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi and the release of Maharani Yesubai were the reasons to increase the importance of the office.
9. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj sowed the seeds to appoint the Peshwa from Bhat family by appointing Bajirao I in the office of the Peshwa.
10. The office of the Peshwa got a lot importance during the reign of Bajirao II as he extended the Maratha power in North.
11. The decision of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was courageous to appoint Balaji Bajirao in the office of Peshwa despite the opposition by the courtesans.
12. Balaji Bajirao also proved his efficiency as his father and grandfather and contributed in transforming the kingdom into the Maratha Empire.
13. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj controlled first three Peshwas from the Bhat family with his strong leadership, excellent decisions and the presence of mind and used their skills to strengthen the Maratha Empire.
14. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had secured the sovereignty and the central power and controlled the powerful Peshwas.
15. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had warned strictly the Peshwas to remove from the office, if they neglected the order of the Chhatrapati and proved inefficiency in their duty.

16. There was the complete control of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj over the three Peshwas, that's why those three Peshwas were loyal to the central power, followed the orders and gave detailed information about every expedition to the Chhatrapati.
17. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was busy in the disputes in his family in his last years of life due to the inheritance issue, so he could not pay attention towards the administration.
18. There was a lot of chaos in Satara due to the inheritance issue during the period of Balaji Bajirao and he took the advantage of the instability in Satara and created his dominance.
19. The first three Peshwas from the Bhat family proved their accomplishment without losing a single battle and expedition. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was not sure about the bravery, efficiency and accomplishment of his successor, so he took a revolutionary decision and handed over the responsibility of the Maratha Confederacy to the Peshwas.
20. Though he gave right to the Peshwa to manage the affairs of the Maratha Confederacy, he didn't let to downplay the importance and the authority of the office of the Chhatrapati. He ordered the Peshwa to follow and respect the command of the Chhatrapati.
21. Maharani Tarabai, for her lust to enjoy the power, accused Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj of being a fake and imprisoned him. It was a shameful act and it caused to downplay the prestige of the throne of the Chhatrapati. Maharani Tarabai was responsible for this to some extent.
22. The respect for the Chhatrapati waned off gradually in the hearts of the Maratha sardars as the Chhatrapati was imprisoned due to the internal disputes.

23. The civil disputes between Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai proved to be beneficial for Peshwa. When Maharani Tarabai and Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj were busy in civil disputes, Peshwa Balaji Bajirao established his dominance all over India and in the Maratha administration with his bravery and diplomacy.
24. Due to the internal disputes in the Maratha power, the Chhatrapati gradually became the nominal and the Peshwa the head of the administration.
25. The inefficiency of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj was also responsible for the Chhatrapati being a nominal head along with the lust of power of Maharani Tarabai.
26. It was the authority of the Chhatrapati to appoint the Peshwa, but at the time of Chhatrapati Ramraja Maharaj, Maharani Tarabai wrote a letter to Peshwa Balaji Bajirao to make Chhatrapati to Ramraja. It shows the importance of the office of the Peshwa and inferiority of the office of the Chhatrapati.
27. The successors of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj were weak in the administration, so the powerful Peshwas became head of the administration.
28. The function of the Chhatrapatis was only to give the robes of the office of Peshwa and the other officials.
29. Because of the charter by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and the accomplishment of the Peshwa, the office of the Peshwa became hereditary in the Bhat family.
30. The office of the Peshwa got importance to such an extent that the sardars in Poona prayed to the Gods and Goddesses all over India and performed *hom-havan* for Gangabai, wife of Narayanro Peshwa, to have a son.

31. The office of the Peshwa should be only from the Bhat family so, Sawai Madhavarao was given the robes of the Peshwaship on the fortieth day of his birth.
32. It was mandatory to be present in the court of Satara to receive the robes of Peshwaship. But Raghunathrao broke the rule and sent a clerk to bring the robes. In this way he humiliated the throne of Chhatrapati and the rule in the administration of the Maratha.
33. Due to the administrative weakness of the Chhatrapatis, the Peshwas controlled not only the administration, but also the expenditure of their masters.
34. All the Maratha sardars had a lot of respect for the Chhatrapatis. Though the successors of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had become the nominal head of the administration, the chiefs of the Maratha Confederacy felt that to rule in the name of the Chhatrapatis was their prime duty.
35. Though the responsibility of the administration was handed over to the Peshwas after Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, all the affairs were managed in the name of the Chhatrapati and formal consent was received for the appointments of the various offices.
36. There was the name of the Chhatrapati on the seal of all the ministers as per the traditions, but at the same time there was no power in the hand of Chhatrapati as per the traditions.
37. The chiefs in the Maratha Confederacy acted as independent ruler in their respective territories as the central power had become nominal, but they were together only because of the Chhatrapati.
38. The Chhatrapati was the symbol of the unity of the Maratha Empire.

39. The office of the Chhatrapati had a lot of importance that's why Robert Clive supported Janoji Bhosale in his attempts to become the Chhatrapati.
40. Because of the strict policies of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, his role was of a sovereign ruler in the administration. But due to the enfeeblement of his successors in the administration and the accomplishment of the Peshwas, the central power became nominal.
41. The negligence of the Chhatrapatis towards the administration and the policy to be dependent upon the Peshwa resulted changes in the administration and the name and fame of the Peshwa gradually increased in the administration of the Marathas.

Suggestive Measurement

1. The contribution of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj in the history of Marathas like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj and Maharani Tarabai, so, it is important and necessary to acknowledge of his contribution.
2. It is necessary to research and write by the researchers and historians about the life and achievement of Chhatursing Bhosale, brother of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II, who struggled throughout his life to regain the lost prestige, dignity and power of the Chhatrapati.
3. Sometimes, the history also forgets to take a note of accomplished persons. One of the brave and diplomatic personalities was Anandibai, mother of Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj. It is necessary to research on her life in the last phase of the history of Maratha Empire.

4. There were a lot limitations came across while studying the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj II and Chhatrapati Pratapsinh Maharaj due to the limitations of availability of reference books. So, more research should be done on the both of Chhatrapati. It will help in the future to study more on their life.